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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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King-Hinds appreciates Kilili's help during transition

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Delegate-elect Kimberlyn King-Hinds, left, poses with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) after the latter showed the former "where to direct visiting constituents for rice and a little pika" in Washington, D.C.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Before returning to the CNMI last week after learning the ropes about congressional duties during what she described as "delegate bootcamp," Delegate-elect Kimberlyn King-Hinds was able to have a meeting with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) and even had lunch with the eight-term congressman.

See TRANSITION on Page 4

AS PART OF SOUTH PACIFIC VISIT
Taiwan's president arrives in Hawaii for a 2-day stop in US

AP
Taiwan President Lai Ching-te greets people at the Kahala Hotel and Resort Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024 in Honolulu.

HONOLULU (AP)—Taiwan's president Lai Ching-te arrived Saturday in Hawaii to begin a two-day transit in the U.S. as part of a trip to the South Pacific, his first since assuming office.

The stopover in Hawaii and one planned for the territory of Guam have drawn fierce criticism from Beijing,

See TAIWAN on Page 4

Palacios-Apatang places workforce development as top priority in 2025

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
delatorreferdie@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang have placed workforce development as a top priority in fiscal year 2025, citing that the CNMI grapples with workforce shortages that hinder economic growth.

Palacios and Apatang shared their offices' plans in their Citizen-Centric Report for FY 2024 that they submitted on Monday to the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor. The top CNMI officials disclosed that a key initiative is the recent Memorandum of

See WORKFORCE on Page 4

Zaji files third amended complaint against CNMI government

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Zaji Zajradhara, who is notorious for suing local companies and government entities, has filed his third amended complaint against Building Optimism, Opportunities, and Stability Program grant adjudicators, and is seeking relief to the tune of $1.2 million.

Last Monday, Zajradhara filed his third amended complaint in the U.S. District Court for the NMI against former Finance secretary David Atalig, former Economic

See ZAJI on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. announced that it has moved its corporate headquarters to the lobby level of the Hotel Nikko Guam in Tumon.
PAGE 9

WORLD
An impeachment complaint was filed Monday against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte, who is facing a legal storm over a death threat she made against the president and her alleged role in extra-judicial killings of drug suspects, corruption and failure to stand up to Chinese aggression in the disputed South China Sea.
PAGE 10

LIFE & STYLE
Elton John says he struggled to watch his new musical because he has lost his eyesight after contracting an infection.
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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

MVA sets Christmas in the Marianas events for Tinian, Rota

Spreading the holiday cheer across the archipelago, the Marianas Visitors Authority will join the respective mayor's offices to host a Christmas variety show in Tinian next month, as well as several events in Rota.

The Christmas in the Marianas Variety Show will be held on Dec. 13, 2024, at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose, Tinian. Beginning at 5pm, revelers of all ages will present Christmas carols, dance performances and costumes throughout the evening. The best performances for first, second, and third place in each category will win cash prizes, and food vendors will be on hand to satisfy the appetite. Individuals and groups may register to participate by contact MVA Tinian Field Operations supervisor Vida Borja at vborja@mymarianas.com or (670) 433-9365.

"In collaboration with the Marianas Visitors Authority, we are thrilled to invite you to this year's Holiday Variety Show, a wonderful opportunity to come together as a community and celebrate the festive season with joy and unity," said Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan. "This event is not just a showcase of diverse talent; it's a celebration of the spirit that binds us all. I encourage everyone to join in the fun and support our talented young performers. Let's make this holiday season a memorable one!"

On Rota, the official Christmas tree will be lit in Songsong village on Dec. 7 at 7pm. Island residents will have the opportunity to win cash prizes for the best decorated yard on Dec. 13. Cash prizes are $500 for first place, $300 for second place, and $200 for third place, with separate judging and prizes for three areas: Songsong, Sinapalo I, and Sinapalo II and III combined. A Christmas float parade will be held on Dec. 14 at 5:30pm from the Roundhouse in Songsong to Tun Kindo Baseball Field in Sinapalo. Interested participants may register with the Rota Mayor's Office at (670) 32209451.

MVA

Students perform at Christmas in the Marianas in December 2023. The 20th Annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration will be organized by Marianas Visitors Authority with numerous community events on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

MVA

Northern Marianas International School band and chorus perform at Christmas in the Marianas in December 2023 in Garapan. The 20th Annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration will be organized by Marianas Visitors Authority on the evenings of Dec. 7 and 14, 2024, at Paseo de Marianas, featuring holiday music, skits, and more.

"It's a Marianas Christmas and the perfect season for a getaway to Tinian or Rota, especially during these festive events," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "With additional inter-island flight service, we expect more travelers will get to enjoy the special island-flavored Christmas of Tinian and Rota this holiday season."

On Saipan, the MVA will host the 20th Annual Christmas in the Marianas in Saipan in collaboration with PDM Promoters, Team PDI, and local schools.

This year's celebration will gather revelers from 5pm to 9pm on Dec. 7 and 14, 2024, in Garapan, Saipan, at Paseo de Marianas, which will be partially closed to vehicle traffic. Twenty public and private schools have signed up to share their holiday spirit with Christmas caroling, skits, and costumes. The festivities also will include a display of Christmas trees featuring natural and recycled decorations made by schoolchildren will be staged for the public to enjoy. Festivities will kick off with a countdown to the lighting of the Christmas Trees on Dec. 7 at 5:30pm. Prizes will be awarded on Dec. 14, 2024, to the top schools in various contests.

Sponsors include Tinian Diamond Hotel Casino & Restaurant and iShop.

For more information, contact lead event coordinator and MVA Community Projects coordinator II Jack Aranda at communityprojects@mymarianas.com or (670) 664-3200/1. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-25-003

CONSTRUCTION OF AS MATUIS TEMPORARY TANK

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the construction of **a temporary water tank in As Matuis.**

The project consists of a temporary water tank in As Matuis with the furnishing of all labor, supervision, equipment and materials for a new temporary fiberglass tank located in As Matuis. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **November 26, 2024 at 1:00 PM (CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hardcopies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-25-003, Construction of As Matuis Temporary Tank" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (CHST) on December 19, 2024,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (CHST) on December 3, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

ARTMAN CORPORATION

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Supreme Court to host 2024 High School Moot Court Competition

The NMI Judiciary will be holding the Commonwealth's High School Moot Court Competition on Dec. 5-6, 2024. Thirty students in grades 9-12 from across the Commonwealth have participated this fall in a Moot Court program that will culminate in a two-day tournament at Guma' Hustisia. The students have learned how to argue in an appellate court by participating in workshops, drafting legal briefs, and presenting oral arguments. Students will present arguments on behalf of their client in the mock case *Katpinteru v. BRAT Air*, regarding an employee's request for religious accommodation and enforcement of a non-compete clause.

On Dec. 5, students will compete in several rounds of oral arguments before panels of lawyers at Guma' Hustisia. Students will compete in teams of two, representing their client on two different issues of law. Members of the NMI Bar Association will serve as justices in the preliminary and semi-final rounds. In the championship round on Dec. 6, the top two teams will argue before Supreme Court Justice John A. Mangloña, Justice Perry B. Inos, and Chief Judge Ramona V. Mangloña of the United States District Court for the NMI.

The champions, finalists, and semi-finalists will receive awards recognizing their achievement. The winning team will represent the Commonwealth at the National Association of Moot Court's regional competition held at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut in April 2025.

Funding for the program has been provided by the Public School System, and organized by the Supreme Court Justices and staff.

The public is welcome to watch any round of competition and show their support for the competitors, but is particularly invited to attend the Championship and Awards Ceremony on Dec. 6, 2024 at 10:30am in the Supreme Court Courtroom, Guma' Hustisia. ***(PR)***

The village survey: Amplifying community voices for ocean stewardship

The ocean has always been at the heart of our culture, livelihood, and identity.

Now, more than ever, Friends of the Marianas Trench Monument needs your insights to help them better understand how indigenous-led ocean stewardship and conservation can guide a sustainable future for our islands.

Why does your participation matter?

■ By sharing your perspectives, you'll help shape strategies that honor our traditions while protecting our marine ecosystems.

■ Your voice will contribute to a vision of conservation that's grounded in our indigenous knowledge and values.

■ Together, we can preserve our heritage for generations to come.

How to join:

1. Scan the QR code on the image to take the survey.

2. Share your thoughts, ideas, and knowledge, it only takes a few minutes, but the impact lasts a lifetime.

By participating, community members will help unify efforts for sustainable ocean resource management and contribute to a vision that reflects the values, culture, and future aspirations of the CNMI.

Together, we can ensure a thriving future for our oceans, our communities, and our culture.

For more information, contact Alex Tudela at atudela@friendsmarianatrench.org or Kina Rangamar at krangamar@friendsmarianatrench.org, or visit our website at friendsmarianatrench.org. ***(PR)***

SUSTAINABLE FRESH GREENS

The Coral Coast Foundation Corp. launched the Sustainable Fresh Greens project in Koblerville last Oct. 31. The project is a collaborative effort between CFCC, the Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services, and the CNMI Green Growth Initiative to create a resilient and eco-friendly local food system in the Pacific Region. This initiative aims to promote sustainable farming, increase local food production, and engage the community through workshops and farm tours. The hydroponic farm, located at Kalayaan Inc., will prioritize growing nutritious salad greens and seasonal produce for school meals. This will minimize transportation emissions and promote a more sustainable food system.

NMC

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
for
ACME Holdings CNMI, LLC
Conditional Use Application
#2024-2758

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. **ACME Holdings CNMI, LLC** Proposes to occupy & utilize **Two (2)** existing warehouses within the Chalan Kiya Industrial Center for its *"Manufacturing & processing"* use. The site is located on **Lot 1734NEW-5-R1** in the village of Chalan Kiya. This area is zoned as **Mixed Commercial.**

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: **December 12, 2024**
Time: **2:00 pm**
Place: **Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 3pm, December 11, 2024. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, at 5911 Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Laulau (former IT&E).

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Henry Hofschneider, Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
for
Soon Hong Chang- Glamping
Conditional Use Application
#2024-2320

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. **Soon Hong Chang** proposes to construct **Thirty (30)** glamping structures with each measuring **22'.8" (L) x 23'.8" (W) x 16' (H),** One (1) snack bar measuring **20' (L) x 40' (W) x 10' (H),** One (1) office building measuring **23' 8" (L) x 22' 8" (W) x 16' (H),** one (1) Single-Family Dwelling measuring **23' 8" (L) x 22' 8" (W) x 16' (H),** and one (1) swimming pool measuring **20' (L) x 40' (W)** for its "*Mixed Use- Glamping*". The site is located on **Lot 1603-15, 1603-16, 1603-17, 1603-18,** and **1603-19** in the village of **Gualo Rai.** This area is zoned as **Village Residential.**

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: **December 12, 2024**
Time: **2:00 pm**
Place: **Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 3pm, December 11, 2024. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, at 5911 Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Laulau (former IT&E).

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Henry Hofschneider, Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
for
Sugar Leaf LLC dba Asa-ya
Conditional Use Application
#2025-0262

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. **Sugar Leaf LLC dba Asa-ya** propose to utilize an existing unit on the second floor of the Misa Building 2 with floor area measuring **38' (L) x 19.5' (W)** for its "Cannabis Retail" use. The site is located on **Lot 001 D 42** in the village of Garapan. This area is zoned as **Garapan Core.**

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: **December 12, 2024**
Time: **2:00 pm**
Place: **Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 3pm, December 11, 2024. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, at 5911 Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Laulau (former IT&E).

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Henry Hofschneider, Chairman

TAIWAN

From page 1

which claims Taiwan as its own territory and objects to official exchanges between the self-ruled democracy and the U.S., the island's biggest backer and military provider.

There were no high-ranking U.S. or Hawaii state officials to greet Lai at the Honolulu hotel where supporters cheered in Mandarin, some waving Taiwanese flags. He visited Hawaii's leading museum of natural history and Native Hawaiian culture, Bishop Museum. Later, he was expected to attend a banquet with supporters.

On Sunday, Lai held a 20-minute phone talk with former U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, according to Taiwan's official Central News Agency. The two discussed China's "military threats" toward Taiwan among other things, according to presidential spokesperson Karen Kuo.

In 2022, China held military drills around Taiwan in response to a visit to the island by Pelosi, then in office.

Lai is on a weeklong trip to visit the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau—three diplomatic allies of the self-governed island in the Pacific. Though Taiwan retains strong contacts with dozens of other nations, it has only 12 formal diplomatic allies.

Bishop Museum CEO Dee Jay Mailer presented Lai with a red lei hulu, or feather garland, made by master featherwork artist Kawika Lum-Nelmida. Lai gave Mailer a headdress, made by Paiwan Indigenous people of Taiwan, and neck and shoulder decorative pieces made by Atayal Indigenous people, also of Taiwan.

Lai's visit shows that Taiwan and the United States have a very strong relationship, said Arthur Chen, the president of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce of North America. He flew to Hawaii from his home near Dallas to welcome the president to the U.S.

Chen said he understood the U.S. has its own foreign policy but he said Lai should be treated as a head of state during his stay.

Taiwan and the U.S. share common values like a belief in democracy and human rights, Chen said. "So we should help each other," he said.

Lai didn't make any public remarks at his initial engagements in Hawaii, but spoke before his departure from Taiwan.

"I want to use the values of democracy, peace, and prosperity to continue to expand our cooperation with our allies, to deepen our partnership and let the world see Taiwan not just as a model of democracy, but a vital power in promoting the world's peace and stability, and prosperous development," he said at Taoyuan International Airport.

WORKFORCE

From page 1

Understanding signing with Palacios, Broadband Policy and Development special assistant Glenn Hunter, and representatives from the CNMI Department of Labor, Northern Marianas College, Northern Marianas Technical Institute, and Island Training Solutions.

According to the Citizen-Centric Report, this partnership aims to prepare the workforce in fiber-optic technology for the upcoming Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program projects.

The report also added that Labor is launching targeted programs to strengthen the workforce in specific occupations, further supporting the CNMI economy.

On economic recovery, the report noted that Palacios and Apatang are committed to building strong partnerships across the private, nonprofit, and public sectors to fast-track progress toward a robust and sustainable economy.

Whether by diversifying CNMI's tourism market, attracting global investments, or strengthening infrastructure, the Palacios-Apatang administration said it remains dedicated to implementing impactful, long-term economic policies that benefit the CNMI for generations to come.

On 902 consultations, the report noted that while the initial round of consultations pursuant to Section 902 of the Covenant between the CNMI and the U.S. Federal Government concluded on Saipan, the governor remains dedicated to advancing these discussions between the CNMI and the U.S. led by U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary Carmen G. Cantor.

Cantor serves as the special representative of the U.S. President and was appointed by the Biden administration.

These sessions, the report pointed out, will provide further opportunities to address the unique needs of the CNMI and to explore cooperative solutions that support long-term progress for the region.

Regarding infrastructure projects, the Palacios-Apatang administration wants to ensure the timely completion of such projects and is reportedly actively working to eliminate unnecessary delays.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

ZAJI

From page 1

Development director Jose Taisague, John Arroyo, and the Bank of Saipan in its corporate capacity in relation to the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, grant program, which aimed to provide loan assistance to CNMI businesses and nonprofit organizations.

According to the third amended complaint, the plaintiff is alleging violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), and retaliation; and claims for monetary damages under the Little Tucker Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1346(a)(2).

"The evidence—primarily comprised of Zajradhara's emails (Exhibits C, D, E) and testimony from John Arroyo, Jesus Taisague, and Will Castro (Exhibit B)—demonstrates a pattern of racketeering activity designed to obstruct Zajradhara's access to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and retaliate against his protected speech. The "Cat's Paw" theory of liability establishes causation," said the complaint.

According to the original suit the plaintiff filed, Zajradhara alleged unfair treatment and misuse of federal funds as he was not awarded a grant under the program.

Specifically, Zajradhara alleges that because he exercised his first amendment right when disclosing the CNMI's misuse of funds, Atalig "constructively denied" a review of his application for ARPA funds while disbursing those funds to his friends and family.

For these alleged claims, Zajradhara asked the court to grant him relief in the form of a monetary award of $1 million or the amount of funds he requested in his American Rescue Plan Act application.

However, Manglona dismissed Zajradhara's claims without prejudice for failing to state a claim.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the BOOST program was a project of the Office of the Governor and the Department of Commerce last year. After the program concluded late last year, the House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations and the Committee on Ways and Means launched an investigation into the BOOST program.

TRANSITION

From page 1

"I am sincerely grateful for the time I have spent with congressman Sablan following the election. There is no one who knows the responsibilities, opportunities, and processes of the CNMI's work in Congress like him, and he has graciously provided me tremendous insight into this role, and the ways in which we can continue to do the good work he has done for the CNMI. This is a historic time for the CNMI. This is the first transition of a congressional office in our history, and I appreciate congressman Sablan's willingness to meet and work through this process together."

Even Sablan shared that he and King-Hinds indeed went out for lunch together and gave her tips where to find island staples like rice and local peppers.

"Among the tips for success I shared with our new delegate, Kimberlyn King-Hinds, was where to direct visiting constituents for rice and a little pika. We shared lunch on Thursday as her incoming-members briefings concluded," he said in his *e-kilili* newsletter.

King-Hinds also confirmed the lunch out, saying, "lunch was good. I had the spicy drunken noodles. Bussin.'"

Aside from her lunch date with Sablan and their work on the transition, she also shared that she's lucky to be coming into the 119th U.S. Congress with like-minded delegates in the persons of Guam Delegate James C. Moylan (R-GU) and Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa).

"I feel very fortunate to be serving the people of the CNMI in Congress alongside the representatives from our Pacific neighbors. Congressman Moylan from Guam and congresswoman Amata from American Samoa have been effective and proactive advocates for the Pacific Insular Areas in their time in the House of Representatives and their work in advocating for our shared challenges is an opportunity for us all to advance our voice among the many competing interests in Congress. Together we are stronger, and I am excited for the chance to collaborate with them and learn from their experiences. Already, I am so happy about the relationship we are building with the Office of Congressman Moylan and the initial thoughts we have shared on ways we can collaborate as One Marianas in the upcoming Congress," she said.

King-Hinds also went in-depth on the delegate boot camp she went through and admitted that the congressional orientation was certainly a "whirlwind of activities, meetings, and training. "

"The CNMI has only had a position in the U.S. Congress since 2008, but Congress itself, the processes, systems, and procedures that govern the operations of congressional offices like ours have been developed over the course of more than a hundred years. So, there is a lot to know about the functioning of congressional offices, the details of how offices are managed, the role of congressional administrative staff and support available to members, and the fiscal management of offices. I jumped on a plane not long after the final votes were cast in the 2024 election, and am happy I was able to hit the ground swiftly. The work that the people of the CNMI need their office to perform can't be delayed by the need to figure out where the light switches are, so understanding these operational and functional elements of the job now is absolutely essential to making sure we can chip away at the challenges our people face from Day 1."

King-Hinds also said how people perceive Congress to be from the media is far from what she saw first-hand during her brief stay in the U.S. Capitol.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BLDG., SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
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WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM • E-MAIL: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a **Special Board Meeting** on **Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the ARFF Classroom located at the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Facility at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan CNMI. The following agenda will be considered, and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

A. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

C. CORRESPONDENCES
1. CPA-BM: 2024-08 (11/25/2024) From Chairman Tebuteb re Thanksgiving Administrative Leave to all CPA Employees.

D. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

E. AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS
1. Financial Affairs Committee
   a. Resolution on Airlines Rates and Charges

F. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

G. EXECUTIVE SESSION/LEGAL MATTERS
1. Executive Director's Report

H. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video conferencing is also available via Zoom.
Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837• Passcode: 573227

/s/ RAMON A. TEBUTEB
Chairman

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
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Zabrina S. Cruz
Acting Administrator

Agnes M. Sablan
Acting Director, DCRM

MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Thursday, December 12, 2024, 2:30PM
DCRM Learning Center, Suite 301
Gualo Rai Center II Chalan Pale Arnold Road Lower

Virtual public participation will continue and encouraged via video conferencing through Zoom link: hhtps://zoom.us/j (Meeting ID: 6706648315) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance and most updated information as Zoom meeting access code may change.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
   A. Call to Order
   B. Roll Call
   C. Adoption of Agenda
   D. Adoption of August 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. PERMIT REVIEW
   1) CRM Permit No. SMS-2025-006
   Project: 46-UNIT RESIDENTIAL DUPLEX APARTMENTS
   Applicant: VISTA HOMES, LLC.
   The project is to construct 46-duplex style multi-family residential units with parking, utilities, and landscaping on Tract No. 22551-R2 in Dandan, Saipan.
   a. Agencies' Discussions
   b. Agencies' Determination

IV. OTHER MATTERS
   1) Proposed amendment to NMIAC 15-20 to revise statement of authority for the rules and regulations
   2) Authorization for DCRM Acting Director to promulgate proposed regulation amendment
   3) Final Adoption of proposed amendment to NMIAC 15-20 to increase the maximum number of parasailing permits issued from 12 to 20
   4) Authorization for DCRM Acting Director to promulgate final adoption of proposed regulation amendment.

V. ADJOURNMENT

US Coast Guard deepens maritime partnerships during engagements in RMI

USCG

Representatives from U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and U.S. Coast Guard District 14 and Republic of the Marshall Islands partners stand for a photo in Majuro, RMI, on Nov. 8, 2024, during several days of critical engagements. During the visit, the team worked with key RMI agencies, including the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority and Sea Patrol, and also volunteered in the community.

MAJURO, Republic of the Marshall Islands—From Nov. 6 to 18, 2024, representatives from U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and U.S. Coast Guard District 14 supported critical engagements with Republic of the Marshall Islands partners, advancing maritime security and fostering collaboration under the Compact of Free Association.

During the visit, the team worked with key RMI agencies, including the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority and Sea Patrol, and also volunteered in the community.

"Our mission is rooted in action and partnership. Every flight, every discussion, and every engagement reflect our commitment to safeguarding lives, securing lawful seas, and empowering Pacific communities," said Lt. Anna Maria Vaccaro, U.S. Coast Guard COFA liaison officer.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Enhanced bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement discussions

Building on discussion from the RMI Joint Committee Meeting in October, U.S. Coast Guard personnel met with RMI representatives to discuss an addendum to the existing bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement. These discussions centered on clarifying operational procedures and addressing sovereignty concerns while ensuring the agreement reflects mutual interests and aligns with U.S. and RMI laws. The meeting highlighted the ongoing commitment to fostering a peaceful, secure, inclusive, and prosperous Pacific region.

Aerial maritime domain awareness operations

A U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules airplane crew from Hawaii conducted maritime domain awareness operations, temporarily basing out of Kwajalein Atoll. Over two days, the aircraft crew flew sorties totaling 15 hours, covering over 51,000 square nautical miles, sighting 23 vessels, and completing 100 percent of their assigned tasking. Their findings were shared with the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency, a regional organization that assists Pacific Island member countries in managing and developing their tuna fisheries. Although severe weather prevented the inclusion of RMI air riders, the mission underscored the U.S. Coast Guard's adaptability and steadfast support for RMI maritime operations.

Local outreach and collaboration

Petty Officer 2nd Class Clayton Garcia, deployed as a U.S. Coast Guard operations specialist, engaged extensively with MIMRA and Sea Patrol, ensuring continuous U.S. Coast Guard presence and operational support and aiding the Hercules crew in their MDA effort. Garcia's professionalism reinforced trust and cooperation with local partners.

"The U.S. Coast Guard remains committed to supporting the RMI in safeguarding its maritime sovereignty, promoting sustainable fisheries, and enhancing regional security," said Vaccaro. "These efforts underscore our enduring partnership between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands."

About the Compact of Free Association

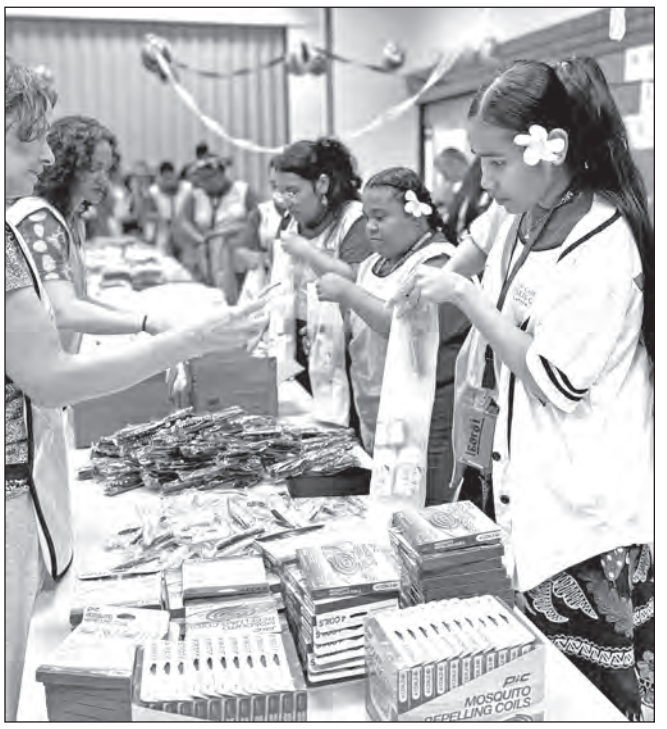
The COFA is a mutually beneficial agreement promoting cooperation and security in the Pacific. It provides unique provisions for defense, economic assistance, and access between the U.S. and RMI and emphasizes shared goals of regional stability, sustainable development, and prosperity. The Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau are also freely associated states under COFA.

About US Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/ Sector Guam

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam supports the Coast Guard's missions of ensuring maritime safety, security, and stewardship in the Pacific. Through search and rescue, law enforcement, and partnership-building efforts, the FM/SG team enhances the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Pacific. ***(PR)***

Micronesian young single adults make gift for Humatak Village

Last Nov. 16, young single adults from across Micronesia donned trademark yellow vests of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints humanitarian teams and cheerfully pitched in to fill approximately 150 dry bags with essential items for residents of the Village of Humatak in Guam. The activity was part of the 2024 Young Single Adult Conference held in Guam from Nov. 14 to 18.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Young single adults from across Micronesia fill approximately 150 dry bags with essential items for residents of the Village of Humatak in Guam as part of the 2024 Young Single Adult Conference held in Guam from Nov. 14 to 18.

» Act of service is part of YSA Conference

The dry bags and their contents were financed by humanitarian funds from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Bags included various hygiene and emergency items as well as school supplies.

Representatives from the Humatak office of Mayor Johnny A. Quinata came to the Barrigada Building where the service activity was held and accepted the donation.

"We have many in our small community who are in need, and will be greatly blessed by this donation," explained Diana Quinata from the mayor's office. "Thank you so much for your help!" Also representing the mayor's office was Raquel Diane Ashment, who volunteers at the mayor's office and is a member of the Santa Rita Ward.

Senior missionary couple elder Berkley Price and sister Erica Price organized the filling and packing of the dry bags under the direction of Jason and Cindy Martin, YSA Conference directors. Approximately 150 dry bags were completed and donated.

The service activity was a great opportunity for the disciples of Christ who attended the conference to actively follow the Savior's admonition to love God by showing love to our neighbors. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Zoning Board Board Meeting

Thursday, December 12, 2024 | 2:00 PM
Multi-Purpose Center • Beach Road, Susupe
Tel: 670-234-9661/2 • Fax: 670-234-9666
E-mail: ZoningBoard@cnmizoning.com

AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of 12/12/24 Agenda
3. Adoption of 11/21/24 Meeting Minutes
4. Communications
5. Public Comments *(not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)*

B. Public Hearings:
1. **Conditional Use Application ##2024-2758– ACME Holdings CNMI, LLC** proposes to occupy and utilize **Two (2)** existing warehouses within the Chalan Kiya Industrial Center for its *"Manufacturing and Processing"* use. The site is located on **Lot 1734NEW-5-R1** in the village of **Chalan Kiya.** This area is zoned as **Mixed Commercial.**

2. **Conditional Use Application #2024-2320- Soon Hong Chang** proposes to construct **Thirty (30)** glamping structures measuring **22'.8" (L) x 23'.8" (W) x 16' (H)** each, along with the following, for its *"Mixed Use- Glamping"*. The site is located on **Lot 1603-15, 1603-16, 1603-17, 1603-18,** and **1603-19** in the village of **Gualo Rai**. This area is zoned as **Village Residential:**
   a. One snack bar measuring **20' (L) x 40' (W) x 10' (H),**
   b. One office building measuring **23' 8" (L) x 22' 8" (W) x 16' (H),**
   c. one Single-Family Dwelling measuring **23' 8" (L) x 22' 8" (W) x 16' (H),** and
   d. one (1) swimming pool measuring **20' (L) x 40' (W)**

3. **Conditional Use Application #2025-0262 - Sugar Leaf LLC dba Asa-ya** propose to utilize an existing unit on the second floor of the Misa Building 2 with floor area measuring **38' (L) x 19.5' (W)** for its *"Cannabis Retail"* use. The site is located on **Lot 001 D 42** in the village of **Garapan**. This area is zoned as **Garapan Core.**

C. Old Business. None

D. New Business. None

E. Report from Zoning Administrator
1. Operations (Permitting and Enforcement)
2. Office Updates
   a. Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018 – Outreach and Enforcement
   b. Government Agencies roles on Public Nuisance

F. Report from Legal Counsel

G. Executive Session

H. Announcements

I. Adjournment

/s/Henry S. Hofschneider, Chairman

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A small but important win for FDA under fire

Given how the U.S. Supreme Court's conservative majority is better known for limiting the authority of federal regulatory agencies than supporting them, this week's small victory for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is an especially welcome one.

The justices served the nation's interest by essentially doing nothing—declining to hear the tobacco industry's First Amendment-based challenge to graphic health warnings on packs of cigarettes the FDA proposed more than four years ago. If anything, the victory was overdue.

Much has been written about Donald Trump's election as a turning point in the public's view of the proper role of government in their lives. We strongly believe at least one expectation hasn't changed: Americans want to hear the truth. And the warnings are, if anything, overdue. They picture, for example, discolored feet with missing toes and a caption about how smoking reduces blood flow to the limbs that can lead to amputation. In another, a medical professional holds a diseased lung with a message of how smoking is linked to a potentially fatal lung disease.

A little difficult to view? Absolutely, and that's the idea. Each year, an estimated 7,500 adult Marylanders die from tobacco-related causes even as overall tobacco use is down. Shouldn't people be made to squirm?

Remember, secondhand smoke is a serious problem as well so the stakes are especially high. And while overall smoking rates have declined in recent years, they remain a serious challenge. The FDA hasn't updated its warnings since 1984.

We can only hope the Silver Spring-based agency will continue to fulfill its mission to protect and promote public health by ensuring the safety of drugs, medical devices, food, cosmetics and other products. Trump's pick to run the FDA, Johns Hopkins surgeon Dr. Marty Makary, has proven moderately controversial but mostly for his past views on COVID and the performance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Makary has indicated he believes the FDA has "lost the trust of Americans" but that could indicate a desire to regulate more not less. More concerning is whether Trump's pick to run the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., will accept science-based evidence given his eccentric views on health care including his belief in a link between vaccines and autism.

Both nominees should be pleased by the Supreme Court's judgment on cigarette warnings and should say so during confirmation hearings.

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Trump shouldn't return to maximum pressure on Iran

By DANIEL DEPETRIS
Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

As President-elect Donald Trump staffs his national security team, speculation is swirling about how the incoming Trump administration will manage some of the most difficult international security problems of the day. While much of the attention thus far has been devoted to the war in Ukraine, the Iranian nuclear issue isn't far behind on the list of priorities.

Like all of his predecessors dating to President George W. Bush, Trump's top goal on Iran is straightforward: Prevent Tehran from creating a nuclear weapon. The question is what combination of threats, pressure, concessions and inducements is required to accomplish this objective. According to reports, Trump's incoming administration is already drafting executive orders that would redouble a previous campaign of maximum pressure, which was designed to cause so much pain to the Iranian economy that Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, would be forced to come to the negotiating table on U.S. terms. As one former Trump administration official said days after the election, "Tightening the economic noose around Iran is going to be a day one foreign policy priority to start cleaning up (Joe) Biden's Middle East mess."

Trump, however, shouldn't rush into a policy that proved grossly ineffectual the first time around. Instead, he should cater to his deal-making instincts, which means being pragmatic, leveraging Washington's diplomatic power and dropping maximalist demands the Iranians have no intention of meeting.

First, it's important to underscore just how counterproductive the Trump administration's first attempt at maximum pressure was. In May 2018, Trump withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, which temporarily capped Tehran's uranium enrichment capability and opened up the Iranian nuclear program to international inspections. In its place, Washington reinstated the economic sanctions that were previously lifted and enacted new ones on Iran's crude oil and Western financial system. Tens of billions of dollars in Iranian foreign reserves were frozen, and Tehran found it increasingly difficult to fund its budget as international investors—including European corporations—pulled out of the Iranian market. Between 2017 and 2020, Iran's oil exports declined by approximately 75%.

Trump administration officials at the time, from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to national security adviser John Bolton, insisted that the sanctions were not only having a massive impact on the Iranian economy but also would push Tehran to eventually come to the table. However, the Iranians spurned negotiations and used Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal to expand their nuclear program, both as a form of retaliation and as a way to accumulate more bargaining power in the event of future talks. Iran, which was limited to 3.67% enrichment under the deal, began enriching to 20%. More advanced centrifuges were installed to churn out uranium. At the end of Trump's presidency, Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile reached 2,442 kg, more than eight times what Iran possessed before the maximum pressure policy was put into effect. (Today, Iran's stockpile has increased to 6,604.4 kg.)

Granted, U.S. sanctions clearly had a negative impact on Iran's wallet. Even so, the Iranians didn't cave—in fact, they escalated. Cargo vessels carrying crude oil from the Persian Gulf were attacked on numerous occasions. In a particularly audacious attack in September 2019, drones and cruise missiles purportedly linked to Iran struck two of Saudi Arabia's largest oil refineries, temporarily shutting down about half of the kingdom's output. The message: If Iran can't export its oil, then nobody can.

Given this track record, it's hard to see why Trump would want to give this policy another shot. Some have argued that the circumstances in the Middle East today are more palatable for a maximum pressure campaign than they were in 2018. Iran's

See TRUMP on Page 7

How could Dems win back workers? Start with respecting the value of work

By LYNN SCHMIDT
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Lynn Schmidt is a columnist and Editorial Board member of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

If the Democratic Party wants to win future elections outside of deep blue areas, they might just need to take inspiration from Goodwill Industries and embrace their philosophy of "A hand up, not a handout."

In the election analysis business, there is a tendency to attribute President-elect Donald Trump's win to one or two major factors, like the economy or immigration. And as time goes on, political scientists like me may learn more, but one takeaway that is not really being discussed as an electoral factor is the role of work, aspiration and prosperity.

Warning: there will be painting with a very broad brush here. Please proceed with the understanding that there are people in our society that require services, and this is by no means a suggestion that they not receive the assistance that they need.

Republican pollster and author of "Party of the People: Inside the Multiracial Populist Coalition Remaking the GOP" Patrick Ruffini recently joined New York Times columnist Ezra Klein on Klein's podcast on an episode titled "The Book That Predicted the 2024 Election."

Ruffini shared polling that he conducted with Hispanic voters living in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas. He asked them what is the number-one problem that you see today with the Democratic Party. Ruffini told Klein that the answer they gave "wasn't too woke or the buzzword of socialism." Rather, they perceived the Democratic party as being "the party of welfare benefits for people who do not work."

"And if you look at how the Democratic Party has been perceived in the last four years, in particular in terms of letting immigrants into the country, illegal migrants into the country, and there's a perception that they're getting government benefits and not working," said Ruffini. "And all of this is coming at the expense of people who made their way in America who started from the very bottom of the rung and worked their way up the economic ladder through their own hard work or and not necessarily through government policies."

This advice, if heeded, could have helped Vice President Kamala Harris in her campaign. Harris' economic policy agenda focused on "Lower costs for middle-class families" and to "Build an Opportunity Economy to Help Americans Get Ahead and Build Wealth." Her campaign website cited her "opportunity economy" consisting of cutting taxes for working families, going after businesses and corporations for price gouging, lowering health care costs, expanding the child tax credit, and offering $25,000 for new home buyers.

While Harris' plan may have put more money in working Americans' pockets, the focus seemed to be about the government's role in helping citizens, rather than empowering them to achieve their own success.

Consider it in light of Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu's famous quote, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." A Harris administration would have doled out a lot of fish.

Speaking of encouraging achievement, back in May, Trump held a large rally in the South Bronx, New York, one of the most Democratic counties in the nation, where he tried to reach out to Black and Hispanic voters. While Trump's speech was littered with lies about the 2020 election and other ramblings, he spent a large portion of that rally talking about success, both for the country and for individual Americans.

"Do you remember I used to give talks on success before politics?," Trump told the crowd. "... It starts with getting the right leadership. It also involves men and women just like you. But I talk a lot about success, and I get paid money to talk about success. I would've done it for nothing. But then because of politics, and if you take a look, because of politics, I stopped doing that. But I think we're in the Bronx, we have young people, people that aspire to success."

As we sift through the data of the election, it appears as if Trump was able to reach at least some of those voters. For example, he increased his vote share in the Bronx by 11 points, from 16% in 2020 to nearly 30% on Nov. 5.

Trump won the 2024 election by turning out his base of supporters, but he also expanded his coalition among other voters, including several groups that have traditionally been a part of the Democratic base.

VoteCast conducted a sweeping survey of the American electorate, interviewing more than 120,000 voters nationwide from Oct. 28 to Nov. 5. Their results found that Trump picked up a small but significant share of Black and Hispanic voters and made narrow gains with men and women. Harris lost support from this portion of the electorate as compared to President Joe Biden's coalition in 2020.

Talking about success seems to have bred electoral success, at least when it came to the former and future president.

For years now Democrats have been wringing their hands over the loss of the working-class voter to Republicans. Instead of trying to "help" workers with aid and programs, Dems should acknowledge, praise and encourage Americans' labor.

Second Trump term means more political attacks on public education

By MAUREEN DOWNEY
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA—When I began covering education in Georgia 28 years ago, most legislation focused on proven drivers of student success including teacher quality, relevant curriculum and adequate funding. State education reform commissions pondered such questions as middle school design, high school size and ideal pupil-teacher ratios.

Today, legislators talk more about school bathrooms, book bans and pronouns, issues that don't bolster academic achievement but do rile up voters. The conversation has changed because the goal has changed. No longer are lawmakers committed to sustaining and improving public schools; they want to supplant and replace them with vouchers and other diversions of public dollars to private entities.

This politicization of public education has not helped students in Georgia, but it has raised the profiles and vote counts for politicians including President-elect Donald Trump, who maintains schools now teach students "to hate their own country." As board chair of the America First Policy Institute, Linda McMahon, Trump's pick for education secretary, endorsed a more patriotic and positive approach to U.S. history.

Among his spurious education claims on the campaign trail, Trump said public schools were providing gender-transition surgery to students, which some voters apparently believed despite the reality that schools can't even give kids aspirin without parental permission. Yet, Trump said, "Your kid goes to school and comes home a few days later with an operation."

In the next four years, we can expect similar political theater and hyperbole to steal the spotlight from pressing concerns. At a time when the workplace favors STEM graduates, the Georgia Legislature devoted more committee hearings to keeping transgender girls off school sports teams than keeping skilled math teachers in classrooms.

No real evidence was ever offered at the hearings two years ago that transgender athletes in Georgia endangered the competitive balance in high school sports. Legislators relied on rare instances in other states to make their argument that Georgia needed to impose a preemptive ban.

On the other hand, we know for certain from Milestones scores that 56% of students in Georgia test below proficient in algebra, a course that is linked to whether students attend and graduate from college. Algebra is also the gateway to higher level math courses that lead to higher earning potential. A year ago, the Program for International Student Assessment scores showed only 7% of American 15-year-olds were capable of math at advanced levels.

The Legislature also prioritized granting parents greater veto power over their children's school reading lists, another solution in search of a problem. Many of the books under siege aren't even on class reading lists; they are simply in the libraries. And those books aren't being checked out in droves.

In fact, many teachers have ceased to assign books to students, asking them instead to peruse excerpts, passages and poems. Why? Because kids are losing the reading muscle; they have no desire to get lost in a book when the wilds of TikTok await them. Even college professors at elite campuses complain their students rebel at lengthy reading lists and easily give up when a book becomes taxing or complex.

The real issue facing Georgia and other states is not what kids read, but whether they read at all and if there are any effective ways to stem the dramatic decline among America's youth in reading for pleasure. If not, we have to figure out how children who now spend hours each day watching videos can become competent writers and spellers without reading. (Some futurists argue artificial intelligence will do all their writing and spelling for them.)

Elected officials understand there's political gain in lashing out at schools as liberal boot camps. Their exaggerations and falsehoods have eroded public trust in schools, although Colorado voters this month rejected enshrining "a right to school choice" in their state constitution, Kentuckians nixed a ballot initiative that would have enabled tax credit scholarships, education savings accounts or vouchers and Nebraskans repealed a $10 million school voucher program approved by their legislature.

I hope school leaders and teachers in Georgia can be heartened by the support they receive in their own communities and ignore the looming political pantomime. An Atlanta Journal-Constitution poll in January found about three-quarters of Georgians expressed some confidence in the state's K-12 public schools.

The public's faith in the federal government is not as enduring, according to the Pew Research Center. While 77% of Americans in 1964 said they trusted the federal government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, the percentage declined in the past 16 years, dropping to 22% this year.

TRUMP

From page 6

economy, after all, suffers from high inflation and sluggish growth. Iran's government isn't exactly popular with the Iranian population. And Tehran's proxy network has suffered significant blows over the last year, with Israel degrading the military capabilities of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Yet this claim is overconfident to the point of hubris. Unlike in the past, when the Gulf States were supportive of Washington's get-tough approach toward Tehran, countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates now want nothing to do with squeezing Iran economically. Ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, for instance, are far better today than they were five years ago—a consequence of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's conclusion that regional stability is necessary if the kingdom's economic development goals are to be realized. The Saudis and Iranians, who resumed diplomatic relations in 2023, are both working to build their bilateral relationship.

Trump could disregard this development and press ahead, but he would then put himself in an unenviable position: Allow the Gulf States to continue trading with Iran or sanction the Gulf to enforce compliance. The first would water down the impact of U.S. sanctions; the second would sour Washington's ties with the Gulf and compromise Trump's attempts to expand the Abraham Accords, considered a significant foreign policy accomplishment of his first term.

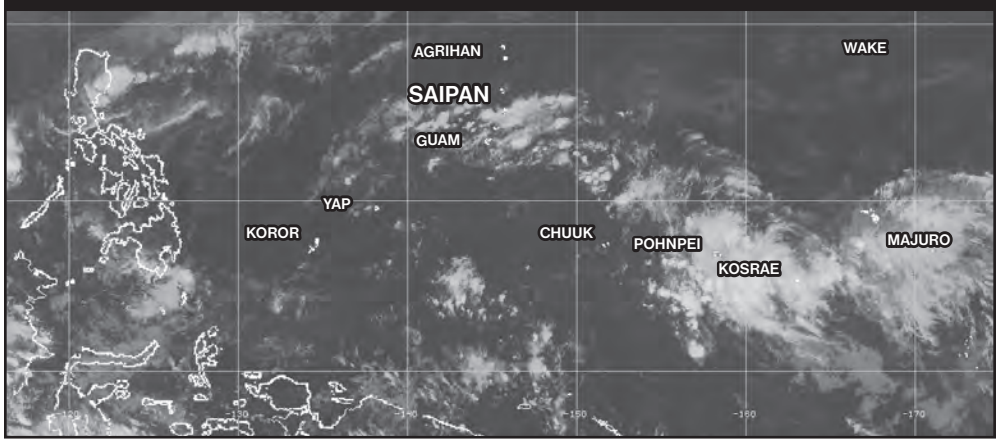
There is an alternative policy available. But Trump will have to overrule the advice of his more hawkish advisers, learn the lessons of the past and explore a diplomatic process that will inevitably require U.S. concessions. Iran wants sanctions relief; the U.S. wants Iran to stop producing high-grade uranium enrichment and to fully cooperate with international inspectors. Because Iran's nuclear program has expanded in the years since, reviving the old nuclear deal is unlikely. A new arrangement is bound to be less comprehensive. But even an imperfect agreement is better than returning to a strategy that not only failed but also made the Iranian nuclear problem even worse.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 20 mph. Chance of showers 50 percent.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. Chance of showers 20 percent.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86° 77°	86° 78°	86° 77°	87° 77°	87° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:26 AM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Very little change was made to the weather and marine forecasts overnight. Latest satellite and radar reveal scattered showers moving across the Marianas early this morning as a broad surface trough lifts west-northwest through the area, bringing with it an influx of deep moisture. The surface trough will support scattered showers across the area through Wednesday, before shifting west of the Marianas come Wednesday night, allowing drier weather to briefly move in for Thursday. The next trough enters the area on Friday, bringing another round of scattered showers as we head into the weekend. Surface observations and scatterometry show trade winds have diminished slightly since yesterday with gentle to moderate sustained speeds, but showers are still capable of mixing down higher gusts of 20 to 30 mph. Local buoy data and altimetry data show combined seas of around 6 to 8 feet for the Marianas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 78°
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 78°
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Thursday	6:29 AM	5:45 PM
Friday	6:30 AM	5:45 PM
Saturday	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Sunday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:00 AM	8:20 PM	-
Thursday	9:52 AM	9:19 PM	-
Friday	10:40 AM	10:17 PM	-
Saturday	11:24 AM	11:14 PM	-
Sunday	12:06 PM	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 27°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	68° / 59°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 70°
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	77° / 50°
Manila	Rain	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 54°
Miami	Thunderstorms	80° / 65°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	43° / 36°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Paris	Showers	41° / 28°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 43°
Rome	Rain	59° / 46°
Salem	Showers	41° / 28°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60° / 45°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 34°
Tokyo	Sunny	48° / 34°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	43° / 33°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:18 AM	Low Tide	-0.57
10:48 AM	High Tide	1.68
4:00 PM	Low Tide	1.25
8:17 PM	High Tide	1.62

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	1:20PM	4:00PM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3218/2305	2:45AM	10:20PM	Daily via Incheon
UA076/183 Guam	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:30AM	6:25AM	Daily
7C3218	2:45AM	6:45AM	Daily from Dec 8
7C3212	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3552	3:55AM	7:20AM	3, 6 from Dec 25

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX77	3:05AM	5:55AM	1, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	5:30PM	10:05PM	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA156	00:40AM	6:25AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:40AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA156	00:40AM	8:45AM	3, 6 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3407	11:20PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3211	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:00PM	1:30AM+1	Daily
7C3217	8:10PM	1:40AM+1	Daily from Dec 8

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3551	9:25PM	2:50AM+1	2, 5 from Dec 25

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

HX76	6:25PM	1:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

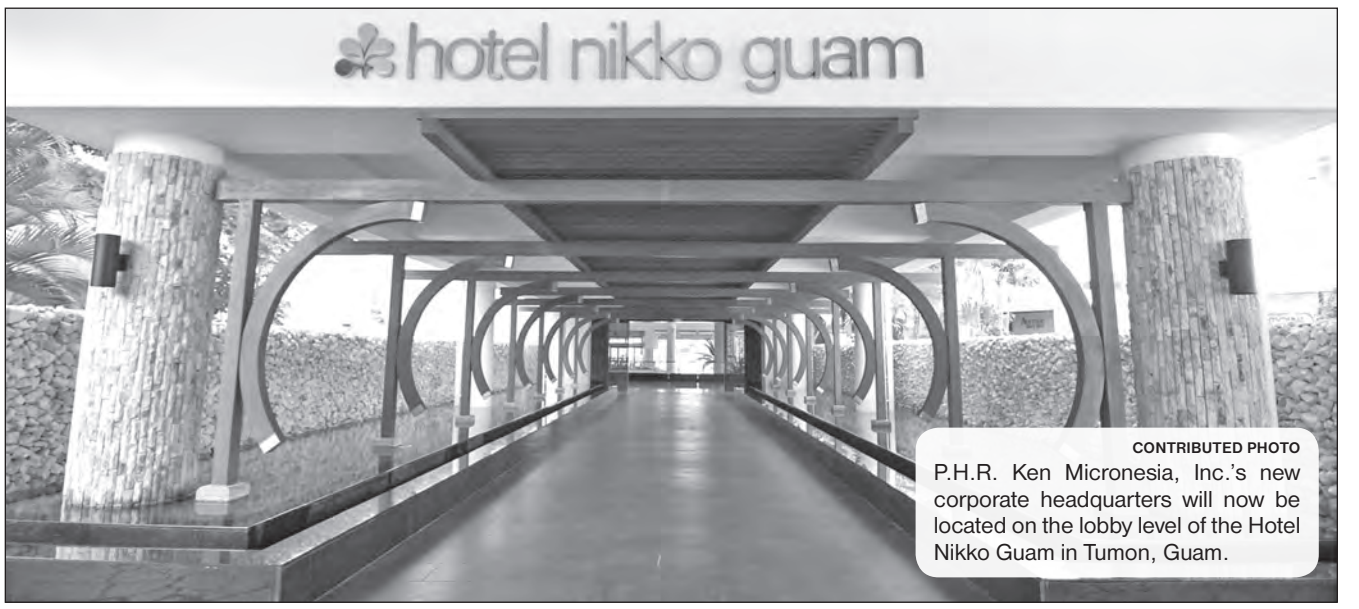
Ken Micronesia moves corporate HQ to Hotel Nikko Guam

TUMON, Guam—P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. announced that it has moved its corporate headquarters to the lobby level of the Hotel Nikko Guam in Tumon. The move took place in November 2024 to better serve its PHR Club Members and provide more convenience for members who access the office for their benefits.

Ken Yanagisawa, president and CEO of P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc., said, "We spent the last two months finishing our new corporate office to reflect the new era of P.H.R. Ken Micronesia on Guam and as we prepare for our 20th anniversary in the region. We designed the space to be welcoming and comfortable for our guests and members in the heart of beautiful Tumon Bay. The new location in the Hotel Nikko Guam will be more convenient for our customers. They can stop into our office when they are visiting the Nikko, The Tsubaki Tower next door, or our properties in and around Tumon – Hyatt Regency Guam, Pacific Islands Club Guam, Hilton Guam Resort and Spa, and RIHGA Royal Laguna Guam Resort."

The P.H.R. Ken Micronesia (PHR Club) office is located on the lobby level of the Hotel Nikko Guam and is open from 10am to 6pm from Monday through Friday. The office will be closed on Christmas, Dec. 25, and New Year's Day, Jan.1. PHR Members can call (671) 646-3860 for personalized assistance.

Yanagisawa noted, "Additionally, the new corporate office allows us to be in a centralized location that is more accessible to our hotel group, leadership teams, and employees in Guam's tourism district. We welcome our community to stop in and say hello when they are in the area. We look forward to serving them in our new space."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc.'s new corporate headquarters will now be located on the lobby level of the Hotel Nikko Guam in Tumon, Guam.

P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, formally founded in 2007 as P.H.R. Ken Asset Management Inc., is a subsidiary of and the managing company for the property holdings of Ken Corporation Group (Ken Corp.) in Guam and Saipan which includes The Tsubaki Tower, Hotel Nikko Guam, Hyatt Regency Guam, Hilton Guam Resort and Spa, Pacific Islands Club Guam, RIHGA Royal Laguna Guam Resort, Aqua Resort Club Saipan, Country Club of the Pacific, and others. PHR Club members enjoy free hotel stays and discounts and benefits at PHR food and beverage outlets, golf, and spa services at more than 30 venues across the group's hotel and golf properties. PHR Club members also receive access to hotel pools and tennis as part of the PHR premier luxury experience. ***(PR)***

Cyber Monday shoppers expected to set record on year's biggest day for online shopping

Consumers in the United States are scouring the internet for online deals as they look to take advantage of the post-Thanksgiving shopping marathon with Cyber Monday.

Even though e-commerce is now part and parcel of many people's regular routines and the holiday shopping season, Cyber Monday—a term coined in 2005 by the National Retail Federation—has become the biggest online shopping day of the year, thanks to the deals and the hype the industry has created to fuel it.

Adobe Analytics, which tracks online shopping, expects consumers to spend a record $13.2 billion on Monday, 6.1% more than last year. That would make it the season's—and the year's—biggest—shopping day for e-commerce.

Online spending is expected to peak between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Monday night, per Adobe—reaching an estimated $15.7 million spent every minute.

For several major retailers, a Cyber Monday sale is a dayslong event that began over the Thanksgiving weekend. Amazon kicked off its sales event right after midnight Pacific time on Saturday. Target's two days of discount offers on its website and app began overnight Sunday. Walmart rolled out its Cyber Monday offers for Walmart+ members on Sunday afternoon and opened it up to all customers three hours later, at 8 p.m. Eastern time.

Consumer spending for Cyber Week—the five major shopping days between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday—provides a strong indication of how much shoppers are willing to spend for the holidays.

Many U.S. consumers continue to experience sticker shock following the period of post-pandemic inflation, which left prices for many goods and services higher than they were three years ago. But retail sales nonetheless have remained strong, and the economy has kept growing at a healthy pace.

At the same time, credit card debt and delinquencies have been rising. More shoppers than ever are also on track to use "buy now, pay later" plans this holiday season, which allows them to delay payments on holiday decor, gifts and other items.

Many economist have also warned that President-elect Donald Trump's plan to impose tariffs next year on foreign goods coming into the United States would lead to higher prices on everything from food to clothing to automobiles.

The National Retail Federation expects holiday shoppers to spend more this year both in stores and online than last year. But the pace of spending growth will slow slightly, the trade group said, growing 2.5% to 3.5% — compared to 3.9% in 2023.

A clear sense of consumer spending patterns during the holiday season won't emerge until the government releases sales data for the period. But some preliminary data from other sources shows some encouraging signs for retailers.

Vivek Pandya, lead analyst at Adobe Digital Insights, notes that discounts from Thanksgiving onward have "exceeded expectations" — and online spending throughout Cyber Week is on track to cross a record $40 billion mark combined.

U.S. shoppers spent $10.8 billion online on Black Friday, a 10.2% increase over last year, according to Adobe Analytics. That's also more than double what consumers spent in 2017, when Black Friday pulled in roughly $5 billion in online sales. Consumers also spent a record $6.1 billion online on Thanksgiving Day, Adobe said. And on Saturday and Sunday, shoppers spent another $10.9 billion online, up 5.8% over last year.

Adobe reported Monday that as of 6:30 p.m. ET, shoppers had spent $8.7 billion on the online shopping holiday. When the final tally is in, Adobe expects consumers will have spent between $13.2 billion and $13.5 billion for the day, making Cyber Monday the biggest online shopping day of the year—and of all time, Adobe said.

Meanwhile, software company Salesforce, which also tracks online shopping, estimated that Black Friday online sales totaled $17.5 billion in the U.S. and $74.4 billion globally. And Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks in-person and online spending, reported that overall Black Friday sales excluding automotive rose 3.4% from a year ago. The retail sales indicator, which is not adjusted for inflation, showed online sales jumped by double digits, while in-store purchase rose a modest 0.7%.

E-commerce platform Shopify said its merchants raked in a record $5 billion in sales worldwide on Black Friday. At its peak, sales reached $4.6 million per minute—with top categories by volume including clothing, cosmetics and fitness products, according to the Canadian company.

Toys, electronics, home goods, self-care and beauty categories were among the key drivers of holiday spending on Thanksgiving and Black Friday, according to Adobe. "Hot products" included Lego sets, espresso machines, fitness trackers, makeup and skin care.

Other data showed physical stores saw fewer customers on Black Friday, underscoring how the huge crowds that were once synonymous with the day after Thanksgiving are now more than happy to shop from the comfort of their homes.

RetailNext, which measures real-time foot traffic in stores, reported that its early data showed store traffic on Friday was down 3.2% in the U.S. compared to last year, with the biggest dip happening in the Midwest.

Sensormatic Solutions, which also tracks store traffic, said its preliminary analysis showed retail store traffic on Black Friday was down 8.2% compared to 2023.

Grant Gustafson, head of retail consulting and analytics at Sensormatic Solutions, noted that in-store traffic was getting spread across multiple days since many retailers offered generous discounts before and after Black Friday.

"Some of the extended Black Friday promotions really ended up leading to a little bit of a softer day-of traffic than expected," Gustafson said.

While physical items like toys and electronics are always popular around the holidays, experts note that consumers have turned to more "experience-driven spending" in recent years, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic waned.

Jie Zhang, a marketing professor at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business, told The Associated Press ahead of the post-Thanksgiving shopping weekend that he expected shoppers to "indulge themselves a bit more" when it comes to "self-gifting," increasing interest in categories like self-care.

Adobe notes that shoppers are also buying higher-ticket items this season—with consumers opening their wallets to invest or "trade up" to more premium versions of products like electronics, appliances and sporting goods.

Brie Carere, executive vice president and chief customer officer at FedEx, cited strong shipping volume for Thanksgiving weekend, and Cyber-Monday has had a good start. She anticipated that FedEx's shipping volume on the online shopping holiday will be slightly up over the 19 million items shipped a year ago on the holiday.

But she said the truncated season—there are five fewer days between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day—is making it harder for her retail customers to forecast.

In fact, Carere said only four of FedEx's top 20 holiday e-commerce customers got their shipping predictions correct for the week before the Thanksgiving weekend. And she also noted that while FedEx predicts low single-digit percentage growth in shipping volume each day, she thinks that many retail customers will see a decline for the overall holiday period because of the truncated season.

"I do think that we're going to see some retailers be disappointed in their volume numbers," she said.

Carere also doesn't anticipate much of a lull in shipping between Thanksgiving weekend and last two weeks before Christmas because of the shorter season.

Jim Katsafanas, president of U.S. Small Business Sales, UPS, agreed, noting last week "we are going to see a pretty consistent surge of volume right through the end."

World

Impeachment complaint filed vs. Philippines VP after she threatened president

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—An impeachment complaint was filed Monday against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte, who is facing a legal storm over a death threat she made against the president and her alleged role in extra-judicial killings of drug suspects, corruption and failure to stand up to Chinese aggression in the disputed South China Sea.

The impeachment bid filed by several prominent civil society activists in the House of Representatives accuses Duterte of violating the country's Constitution, betrayal of public trust and other "high crimes," including the death threats she made against the president, his wife and the speaker of the House of Representatives.

Duterte did not immediately issue any response to the impeachment bid, which accused her of about two dozen alleged crimes.

"We're hoping that with this complaint, we can end the nightmare that our vice president has brought to the people," said Rep. Percival Cendana, who gave the required endorsement of the complaint.

The vice president's threats showed the "extent of respondent's mental incapacity, her depravity and lack of mental fitness to continue holding the high office of vice president of the Philippines," said a copy of the complaint seen by The Associated Press. "The same constitute not only betrayal of public trust but also a high crime which would warrant her immediate impeachment from office."

Duterte, a 46-year-old lawyer, was also accused in the complaint of having unexplained wealth and of allowing a continuation of the extra-judicial killings of drug suspects begun by her father, a former mayor of southern Davao City, when she held that position in the past.

The vice president's legal troubles have unfolded with the backdrop of her increasingly bitter political feud with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his allies. She said in online news conference on Nov. 23 that she has contracted an assassin to kill Marcos, his wife and Speaker Martin Romualdez if she were killed, a threat she warned was not a joke.

She later said she was not threatening him but was expressing concern for her own safety.

The impeachment complaint will be scrutinized by the Philippine Congress, which is dominated by allies of Marcos and his cousin and key backer, Romualdez, who also has been politically at odds with the vice president.

The process could take weeks or months. Congress is to start its Christmas recess on Dec. 20 and resume on Jan. 13. Many legislators will then start campaigning for reelection before May 12 midterm elections.

The House has been investigating the alleged misuse of 612.5 million pesos ($10.3 million) of confidential and intelligence funds received by Duterte's offices as vice president and education secretary. She has since left the education post.

AP

House Secretary General, Reginald Velasco, left, receives an impeachment complaint filed Monday, Dec. 2, 2024 against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte by several prominent opponents and activists, including former Senator Leila de Lima, center, and Akbayan Partylist representative Perci Cendana, right, at the House of Representatives in Quezon City, Philippines.

Hezbollah attack draws Israeli strikes on Lebanon, killing 11 people

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel unleashed its largest wave of airstrikes across Lebanon since agreeing to a ceasefire with Hezbollah last week, killing at least 11 people on Monday after the Lebanese militant group fired a volley of projectiles as a warning over what it said were Israeli truce violations.

The projectiles were apparently the first time that Hezbollah took aim at Israeli forces after the 60-day ceasefire went into effect last Wednesday. The increasingly fragile truce aimed to end more than a year of war between Hezbollah and Israel—part of a wider regional conflict sparked by the devastating Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

In the United States, President-elect Donald Trump demanded the immediate release of Israeli hostages held by the Palestinian militant Hamas group in Gaza, saying on social media that if they are not freed before he takes office in January there would be "HELL TO PAY."

It was not immediately clear whether Trump was threatening to directly involve the U.S. military in Israel's ongoing war in Gaza. The U.S. has given Israel crucial military and diplomatic support throughout the nearly 15-month conflict.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said an Israeli airstrike on the southern village of Haris killed five people and wounded two while another airstrike on the village of Tallousa killed four and also wounded two.

Israel's military carried out a string of airstrikes late Monday against what it said were Hezbollah fighters, infrastructure and rocket launchers across Lebanon, in response to Hezbollah firing two projectiles toward Mount Dov — a disputed Israeli-held territory known as Shebaa Farms in Lebanon where the borders of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel meet. Israel said the projectiles fell in open areas and no injuries were reported.

Hezbollah said in a statement that it fired on an Israeli military position in the area as a "defensive and warning response" after what it called "repeated violations" of the ceasefire deal by Israel. It said complaints to mediators tasked with monitoring the ceasefire "were futile in stopping these violations."

Before the Hezbollah projectiles, Israeli carried out at least four airstrikes and an artillery barrage in southern Lebanon, including a drone strike that killed a person on a motorcycle, according to Lebanese state media. Another strike killed a corporal in the Lebanese security services.

Israel has said its strikes are in response to unspecified Hezbollah violations, and that under the ceasefire deal it reserves the right to retaliate.

Lebanon's parliament speaker, Nabih Berri, accused Israel of violating the truce more than 50 times in recent days by launching airstrikes, demolishing homes near the border and violating Lebanon's airspace.

Officials in the U.S.—which along with France helped broker the truce and heads a commission meant to monitor adherence to the deal — played down the significance of Israeli strikes. White House national security spokesman John Kirby said, "Largely speaking, the ceasefire is holding."

"We've gone from dozens of strikes down to one a day maybe two a day," Kirby told reporters, referring to Israeli strikes. "We're going to keep trying and see what we can do to get it down to zero."

Under the deal, Iran-backed Hezbollah has 60 days to withdraw its fighters and infrastructure from southern Lebanon. During that time, Israeli troops are also to withdraw to their side of the border.

In a post on his Truth Social site, Trump called for Palestinian militants to free all of the roughly 100 Israeli hostages still held inside Gaza, around two-thirds of whom are believed to be alive.

If not, Trump said, "Those responsible will be hit harder than anybody has been hit in the long and storied History of the United States of America. RELEASE THE HOSTAGES NOW!"

Hours earlier, the Israeli government confirmed the death of Omer Neutra, a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen, whose body is still believed to be held by Hamas in Gaza, according to the Israeli government. The Biden administration is mounting a last-ditch effort to try to restart talks between Israel and Hamas.

WORLD BRIEFS

US will send Ukraine $725M more in counter-drone systems, anti-personnel land mines

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. is preparing to send Ukraine an additional $725 million in military assistance, including counter-drone systems and munitions for its High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, which could indicate more of the longer-range missiles are headed to the battlefield. It was unclear whether the munitions for the HIMARS are the coveted ATACMS—the Army Tactical Missile System—but Ukraine has been pressing for more of the longer-range missiles to strike additional targets inside Russia. The package, announced Monday by the State Department, also includes more of the anti-personnel land mines that Ukraine is counting on to slow Russian and North Korean ground forces in Russia's Kursk region. President Joe Biden has pledged to spend all of the military assistance funds Congress approved this year for Ukraine before the end of his administration on Jan. 20, which before Monday's announcement included about $7.1 billion in weapons that would be drawn from the Pentagon's stockpiles. There is widespread speculation about what the new Trump administration will mean for Ukraine as the incoming president has promised to end the conflict. In a major shift, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signaled on Friday that an an offer of NATO membership to territory under Kyiv's control could end "the hot stage of the war."

French government faces no-confidence vote over Barnier's austerity budget

PARIS (AP)—French Prime Minister Michel Barnier is bracing for a no-confidence vote this week, a political reckoning almost certain to topple his fragile government and send shockwaves across the eurozone. Barnier on Monday invoked a rarely used constitutional mechanism to push through the contentious 2025 budget without parliamentary approval, arguing it was essential to maintain "stability" amid deep political divisions. The move immediately drew sharp backlash, with Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally and the leftist New Popular Front both filing no-confidence motions in response, setting the stage for a vote as early as Wednesday that could see Barnier's ouster. The looming showdown unfolds against the backdrop of a fractured National Assembly, left in disarray after June's snap elections delivered no clear majority. President Emmanuel Macron had turned to Barnier in September to navigate the impasse and address France's soaring deficit. Yet Barnier's proposed austerity budget—slashing 40 billion euros ($42 billion) in spending and raising taxes by 20 billion euros—has only deepened divisions, inflaming tensions in the lower house and triggering this dramatic political confrontation. The use of the constitutional tool, called Article 49.3, allows the government to pass legislation without a parliamentary vote but leaves it exposed to no-confidence motions. Opposition leaders argue that Barnier's concessions, including scrapping an electricity tax hike, do not go far enough to address their concerns. Le Pen accused Barnier of ignoring her party's demands. "Everyone must shoulder their responsibilities," she said.

Life & Style

Elton John says he has lost his eyesight

LONDON (AP)—Elton John says he struggled to watch his new musical because he has lost his eyesight after contracting an infection.

» Struggles to see his new stage musical

The singer-songwriter attended the opening night of "The Devil Wears Prada" in London on Sunday and told the audience that "I haven't been able to come to many of the previews because, as you know, I have lost my eyesight."

"So it's hard for me to see it, but I love to hear it and, boy, it sounded good tonight," he said.

John, 77, disclosed in September that an infection had left him "with only limited vision in one eye." He wrote on Instagram that "I am healing, but it's an extremely slow process and it will take some time before sight returns to the impacted eye."

John wrote the score for "The Devil Wears Prada," a stage musical based on the 2006 movie about a young journalist navigating the glamour and egos of a glossy fashion magazine.

AP

Elton John waves to the waiting media as he leaves the Royal Courts Of Justice in London, Monday, March 27, 2023.

The production at London's Dominion Theatre stars Vanessa Williams as the fearsome editor Miranda Priestly, played by Meryl Streep in the film.

Sunday's gala, a fundraiser for the Elton John AIDS Foundation, was attended by celebrities and fashion-industry figures including designer Donatella Versace and former Vogue editor Anna Wintour, the rumored inspiration for the Priestly character.

Wintour described the musical as "entertaining."

Harvey Weinstein hospitalized after 'alarming blood test,' attorney says

NEW YORK (AP)—Harvey Weinstein was hospitalized Monday following an "alarming blood test," his attorney said, less than a week after the disgraced movie mogul filed a legal claim alleging substandard medical care at New York City's notorious jail complex.

AP

Harvey Weinstein, center, appears in criminal court in New York, Sept. 18, 2024.

Weinstein, 72, was sent to Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan for an "emergent treatment due to an alarming blood test result that requires immediate medical attention," his attorney, Imran Ansari, said in a statement.

"It is expected that he will remain there until his condition stabilizes," the statement continues. "His deprivation of care is not only medical malpractice, but a violation of his constitutional rights."

A spokesperson for New York City's Department of Correction did not immediately respond to an email. The agency's inmate database confirmed that Weinstein had been transferred from Rikers Island to the Bellevue Hospital Prison Ward in Manhattan.

Weinstein has been in city custody since earlier this year after the New York Court of Appeals overturned his 2020 rape conviction in the state. The case is set to be retried in 2025. Weinstein has denied any wrongdoing.

In a legal filing last week, Weinstein's attorneys accused the city of providing him with substandard medical care for a litany of medical afflictions, which include chronic myeloid leukemia and diabetes.

"When I last visited him, I found him with blood spatter on his prison garb, possibly from IV's, clothes that had not been washed for weeks, and he had not even been provided clean underwear—hardly sanitary conditions for someone with severe medical conditions," Ansari said in a statement that likened Rikers Island to a "gulag."

The troubled jail complex, located on an island in New York City's East River, has faced growing scrutiny for its mistreatment of detainees and dangerous conditions.

Ted Danson to be honored with Carol Burnett Award at the Golden Globes

NEW YORK (AP)—The Golden Globes are raising a glass to former "Cheers" star Ted Danson by naming him the Carol Burnett Award honoree for 2025.

AP

Ted Danson appears at a promotional event for "The Good Place" in Los Angeles on June 19, 2018.

Danson, a three-time Globes winner, has been a fixture on TV since he broke out as Boston bartender Sam Malone on NBC's comedy "Cheers." His other credits include "The Good Place," "Mr. Mayor," "Fargo," "CSI" and "CSI: Cyber," "Damages" and "Becker." Danson currently stars in Netflix's "A Man on the Inside."

The Globes' telecast is scheduled for Jan. 5 live on CBS and streaming on Paramount+. Comedian and actor Nikki Glaser has been picked to host.

The Carol Burnett Award was inaugurated in 2019 and is presented to an honoree who has "made outstanding contributions to television on or off screen." Past recipients include Norman Lear, Ryan Murphy and Ellen DeGeneres. The first was Burnett herself.

"Ted Danson has entertained audiences for decades with his iconic performances that will forever be ingrained in television history," Helen Hoehne, president of the Golden Globes, said in a statement. "His renowned career is a testament to his remarkable talent and versatility as an actor and bears resemblance to the award's legendary namesake."

Danson's film credits include "Hearts Beat Loud," "Three Men and a Baby" and Steven Spielberg's World War II drama "Saving Private Ryan." He is also an environmental activist, co-founding the American Oceans Campaign.

Woman discovers truth of fiance's secret life

DEAR ABBY: I have been with the same man for three years, and we have been engaged for a year. I love him with all my heart, but I just learned through a phone call that he has been fooling around with men from the internet. I have also seen some messages in his email.

Does this mean he is bi and never told me? I don't know what to do. Please help me before I make a mistake.

HURTING IN LOVE

DEAR HURTING: What this means is your fiance is either bisexual or gay. For both your sakes, tell him you know what has been going on, because if he's unfaithful now, marriage vows won't change him. Ask your doctor to test you for STDs, and then call off the wedding so you can find a mate who will be faithful—and he can find a relationship in which he can truly be himself.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have been married seven years. It's the second marriage for both of us. We have a good relationship and love each other. I told her before we were married that, while I like animals, I do not want a pet. She's an animal lover and is now pressuring me to get a small dog. She's hoping I will change my position, but I will not.

She told me this morning that she might have to leave me and find someone who wants a pet. I told her I understand and will accept her decision. Now I need guidance because I realize that a dog is more important to her than our relationship. Please help.

ANNOYED IN INDIANA

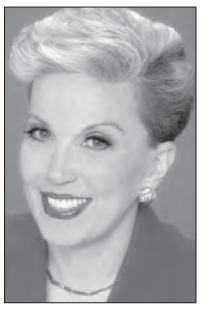
DEAR ANNOYED: I wish you would have stated why you feel so strongly about not having a (small) dog in your home. You and your wife need more mediation than I can offer in a letter. A marriage counselor may be able to help you to communicate with each other more effectively than you have been. For her to have given you a semi-ultimatum was wrong, but it indicates to me that you two may have more problems to resolve than whether to get a dog.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Our daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons live in Australia because of our son-in-law's job. One grandson will be bar mitzvahed soon, and our daughter is asking us to send her a list of our friends so she can send them invitations. Because going to Australia is such a long and expensive trip, we are quite sure that none of our friends will attend and will regard the invitation as a request for a gift. Should we send her the list she's requesting?

CONFUSED GRANDPARENTS

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR GRANDPARENTS: I am against sending an invitation to anyone who isn't a close relative for the reason you stated. Because of the distance, it WILL seem like a bid for gifts or money. A diplomatic way of conveying the news of your grandson's rite of passage would be to share it verbally with friends -- who can then volunteer that they would like to send the boy something. Perhaps the feedback you receive can shape the invitation list.

■■■

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

THANKS FOR HELPING ME MAIL MY LETTER TO SANTA.
IT SURE WAS HEAVY.
THOSE BIG ENVELOPES ONLY HOLD A COUPLE HUNDRED PAGES. THAT'S WHY I USED A BOX.
I HOPE SANTA DOESN'T THROW HIS BACK OUT WHEN HE GETS IT.
ALL I CAN SAY IS, THIS YEAR SANTA HAD BETTER BRING EVERYTHING ON MY LIST! I'VE BEEN EXTREMELY GOOD ALL YEAR!
WHAT ABOUT THE NOODLE INCIDENT?
NO ONE CAN PROVE I DID THAT.!!

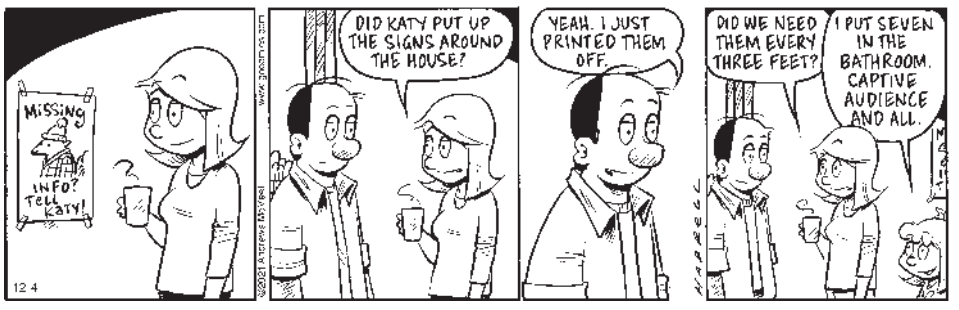
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

BEWARE OF CHIHUAHUA
WHO THINKS HE'S A GREAT DANE
YEAH, RIGHT
BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!
NICE TRY, PAL
KILLER

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


MISSING
INFO? Tell Katy!
DID KATY PUT UP THE SIGNS AROUND THE HOUSE?
YEAH. I JUST PRINTED THEM OFF.
DID WE NEED THEM EVERY THREE FEET?
I PUT SEVEN IN THE BATHROOM. CAPTIVE AUDIENCE AND ALL.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY CALLED BEFORE YOU ARRIVED.
WHA? FOR?
TO TELL ME YOU HAVE A THIRTY-FIVE-CENT COPAYMENT ON THIS TONGUE DEPRESSOR.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Talk on and on
4 Just one of those things?
8 Tactic
12 Hot temper
13 In — veritas
14 Un-hurried gait
15 Broadway actress Salonga
16 Safety straps
18 "The Gold-finch" author Donna
20 "Un-stoppable" singer
21 Zhivago's love
24 Senate broad-caster
28 "American Idol" host Ryan
32 Wry Bombeck
33 Stately tree
34 Future juniors
36 "Alley —"
37 Anniver-sary cake layer
39 Fish-eating birds
41 Jazz band section
43 Social reformer Jacob
44 Mentalist Geller
46 San Francisco gridder
50 Taste enhancer
55 Jargon suffix
56 Wheel bar
57 Wrench, for one
58 Remote batteries, often
59 Incite
60 Mando-lin's kin
61 Deep hole

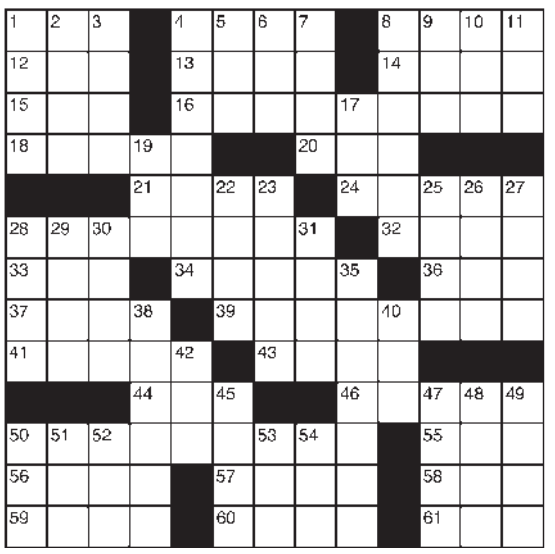
DOWN

1 Coated with gold
2 Length times width
3 Withstand
4 Emmy-winning celebs
5 Hasten
6 "Blonde" actress — de Armas
7 Young-sters
8 Make happy
9 Texter's chuckle
10 Select, with "for"
11 "Indeed!"
17 Paper Mate rival
19 Patient's need, briefly
22 Antique cars
23 Re-garding
25 Ship's front
26 Out of control
27 Siestas
28 Collec-tor's goals
29 "On the Water-front" director Kazan
30 Visa rival, briefly
31 Popular Asian cuisine
35 Roofing material
38 Didn't discard
40 "Do — say!"
42 "No seats" sign
45 World-wide (Abbr.)
47 Tide variety
48 Actor Morales
49 Take five
50 Show fatigue
51 Outer (Pref.)
52 Mode lead-in
53 Chit
54 Word of denial

Solution time: 23 mins.

P	I	T	A		L	E	D	A		C	O	N
O	W	E	N		I	V	E	S		U	M	A
T	O	N	Y	S	T	A	R	K		T	A	T
			O	H	E	S		A	S	I	R	O
Y	E	S	N	O			I	N	K	Y		
E	R	T	E		A	B	S	C	I	S	S	A
I	I	A		A	L	O	N	E		A	O	L
I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T		E	R	I	E
		E	M	I	S			A	N	K	L	E
I	I	P	P	I		C	A	H	A			
U	T	A		S	C	U	F	F	M	A	R	K
B	A	R		I	U	B	A		O	M	N	I
E	L	K		S	E	A	R		R	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer 12-4



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tyra Banks, 51; Jay-Z, 55; Marisa Tomei, 60; Jeff Bridges, 75.

Happy Birthday: Focus, high energy and taking care of business are in the stars. Refuse to let outside influences interfere or distract you from what's vital in maintaining the lifestyle that suits your needs. Question where every dollar goes and pay attention to expiration dates and documents that require revisions. Be quick to speak up if you don't like something, and enforce discipline to ensure you finish things on time and without flaws. Your numbers are 2, 17, 26, 31, 38, 42, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Get up and go. Make plans, participate in events and learn all you can to help you make better decisions or clear your mind of nonsense that outside influences are pressuring you to believe, purchase or support. Trust your ability to seek and find what makes you happy. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Establish how you want to use your skills and experience, and target a position that attracts your attention. A change will give you a new lease on life that energizes your actions at home and work. Someone will take advantage of you if you don't monitor your investments and expenditures. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Note how others receive and respond to you and your gestures. You'll need to protect yourself from fast talkers and anyone trying to put you in a vulnerable position or take advantage of you. Stick to what and who you know and trust. Self-improvement and personal growth are favored. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Tunnel vision will allow you to explore the possibilities and to convert your skills to address current trends. Let your imagination take over and test your theories. Establish what's important to you and make changes that enhance your confidence. It's your turn to shine, so unleash your charm and enjoy. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* An energetic attitude and approach to life will guarantee results. Participate, offer suggestions and sign up for something that makes you feel good about yourself and your achievements. Your contributions will lead to an unexpected opportunity and encounter with someone special. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* No matter what you encounter, turn a negative into a positive with a smile, a helping hand and the intent to make a difference. Be the one to start a wave of happiness and clarify the importance of kindness. Set a good example and enjoy the effects that unfold. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Share your opinion, but get your facts straight first. Touting your beliefs will encourage you to meet and solidify a team to help you reach your goal. Refuse to let domestic or health issues deplete your ability to finish what you start. Protect yourself, but don't quit now. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Take pleasure in conversing with people trying to make a difference, and it will verify your thoughts and feelings and clarify the best way to pitch in and help. Attending a conference or acting on behalf of someone unable to do so will be both uplifting and opportunistic. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Do yourself a favor and put your mind at ease. Stop procrastinating and start clearing up the debris standing in your way. A conservative change regarding how you earn or handle your money will help you establish what you can afford and what satisfies your soul. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Ponder over your choices, listen to your heart and do what's best for your soul. An opportunity is worthwhile only if it satisfies your needs. A change of scenery will offer a unique perspective regarding what's possible. Socializing will lead to exciting introductions and personal growth. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take control before someone tries to dictate what to do next. Put your energy into projects encouraging positive change, a healthier lifestyle or a move that will distance you from negativity and poor choices. Be a leader, not a follower, and it will help you achieve your aspirations. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A serious attitude will help ward off someone trying to lead you astray. You'll need to devise an innovative plan to bring about group change. Take the microphone, paint an honest picture and see who follows you. Researching and experiencing exciting destinations will help you find your bliss. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are unique, determined and outspoken. You are changeable and proactive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4		7			1		6
		6		3		9		7
		7	9			3		
		8					9	2
2	6	9			5			
	1				7			
	5		4	1		6		
		4			9			5
	9		5		6	7	3	

Difficulty: ★★★ 12/4

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	7	1	6	5	8	2	3	4
5	6	4	3	7	2	1	8	9
2	8	3	9	1	4	5	6	7
7	1	6	2	8	3	9	4	5
3	5	8	4	9	7	6	2	1
4	2	9	1	6	5	3	7	8
1	3	2	8	4	9	7	5	6
6	4	7	5	2	1	8	9	3
8	9	5	7	3	6	4	1	2

Difficulty: ★★ 12/3

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

MOSHING Solution: 10 letters

A	P	D	Y	G	G	N	I	K	C	U	B	U	M	P
E	U	N	E	V	Ⓕ	D	L	A	R	U	T	L	U	C
T	N	A	G	Ⓐ	A	R	E	T	N	E	C	N	S	R
N	C	B	Ⓝ	N	M	E	T	A	L	G	C	T	I	O
E	H	Ⓢ	I	R	O	H	H	E	R	O	Y	S	C	W
M	I	S	K	S	T	I	P	I	N	L	G	G	C	D
N	N	I	C	L	U	B	T	T	E	N	N	O	E	M
I	G	N	I	N	N	U	R	A	I	I	N	K	O	E
A	N	J	K	I	A	O	M	P	T	T	C	T	V	R
T	I	U	E	L	L	U	P	A	A	O	I	C	S	O
R	M	R	E	L	I	E	O	C	N	O	R	I	P	C
E	M	Y	A	D	T	L	T	K	N	U	P	R	U	D
T	A	B	A	S	F	S	T	S	E	F	K	C	O	R
N	L	T	R	E	C	N	O	C	S	P	A	L	R	A
E	S	U	O	E	S	A	G	J	L	I	V	E	G	H

© 2024 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/4

Band, Bucking, Bump, Center, Circle, Club, Concert, Contact, Crowd, Cultural, Entertainment, Fans, Floating, Gaseous, Groups, Hardcore, Heavy, Herd, Injury, Jostle, Kicking, Knocked, Laps, Live, Metal, Motion, Music, Pits, Punching, Punk, Ritual, Rockfest, Rotation, Running, Slamming, Stadium, Stepping, Style, Uncontrollable, Venue

Yesterday's Answer: Signal

For **WONDERWORD** apps, books & more, visit Wonderword.com, or call 1-855-232-2367. Order now in time for the holidays!

Hawks beat skidding Pelicans, 124-112, to extend win streak to 4

ATLANTA (AP)—Trae Young had 12 points and 15 assists for his 15th double-double of the season, and the Atlanta Hawks beat the skidding New Orleans Pelicans 124-112 on Monday night for their fourth straight victory.

De'Andre Hunter scored a team-high 22 off the bench for the Hawks on his 27th birthday.

CJ McCollum led New Orleans with 29 points, one shy of his season high. Dejounte Murray, greeted by cheers in his first return to Atlanta since being traded by the Hawks last offseason, finished with seven points and 10 assists.

The depleted Pelicans (4-18) have lost nine in a row overall, and 11 of 12 on the road this season. The team's long injury list includes star players Zion Williamson and Brandon Ingram.

AP

Atlanta Hawks forward De'Andre Hunter (12) grabs a rebound from New Orleans Pelicans center Daniel Theis (10) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 2, 2024, in Atlanta.

CELTICS 108, HEAT 89

BOSTON (AP)—Jaylen Brown scored 29 points, Jayson Tatum had 18 points and 11 rebounds and Payton Pritchard scored 25 off the bench on Monday night as the Boston Celtics beat the Miami Heat 108-89.

Derrick White added 19 points as the defending NBA champions won for the eighth time in nine games.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 19 points and 10 rebounds and Tyler Herro scored 19 for Miami. Herro was 2 for 10 from 3-point range, and the Heat shot 23% from beyond the arc and 36% from the field.

Both teams were without key players for the second night of a back-to-back after losing on Sunday.

Miami played without Jimmy Butler, who has missed five of the first 19 games with a knee injury. The Celtics were without Jrue Holiday, Al Horford and Kristaps Porzingis.

Miami scored the first seven points and then went cold while the Celtics ran off 17 of the next 19 points to take the lead. Boston made it a double-digit lead early in the second quarter and went up by 20 in the third.

TIMBERWOLVES 109, LAKERS 80

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Julius Randle scored 18 points and Rudy Gobert had 17 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Minnesota Timberwolves past the Los Angeles Lakers 109-80 on Monday night.

Naz Reid and Nickeil Alexander-Walker each scored 15 for the Wolves (10-10), who limited the Lakers to their lowest point total since a 122-73 loss at Dallas in 2017, according to Sportradar.

Anthony Edwards had only eight points on 3-for-13 shooting for the Wolves, but his Olympic teammates LeBron James and Anthony Davis were just as quiet for the Lakers (12-9).

James, who has missed 19 straight 3-pointers, had 10 points on 4-for-16 shooting. Davis had 12 points and 11 rebounds. D'Angelo Russell scored 20 in his return from illness and to the starting lineup.

After beating Utah 105-104 on Sunday, the Lakers traveled another time zone east to face a team they beat 110-103 in the season opener behind 36 points and 16 rebounds from Davis.

BULLS 128, NETS 102

CHICAGO (AP)—Josh Giddey had 20 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, helping the Chicago Bulls beat the Brooklyn Nets 128-102 on Monday night.

It was Giddey's first triple-double of the season and No. 12 for his career.

Nikola Vucevic had 21 points and 10 rebounds for Chicago, which had lost three of four. Matas Buzelis scored 20 points on 7-for-10 shooting, and Zach LaVine finished with 18.

Brooklyn lost its third consecutive game—all in the last four days. Dariq Whitehead scored 18 points for the Nets, and Dennis Schroder had 16 points and 10 assists.

Brooklyn played without forward Cam Johnson because of a sprained left ankle—part of a long list of injuries for the Nets. He scored 26 points in Sunday's 100-92 loss to Orlando.

Chicago guard Coby White also was sidelined by a sprained left ankle.

The Bulls started to pull away in the third quarter, outscoring the Nets 36-22 in the period. Buzelis' basket off a pass from Giddey made it 92-72 going into the fourth.

LeBron's jumper is off, and the Lakers are struggling on offense

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—LeBron James is in quite the shooting slump—especially from long distance.

James missed all four of his 3-point attempts for the Los Angeles Lakers in a 109-80 loss at Minnesota on Monday night, stretching his skid to 0 for 19 from deep over the last four games.

After going 4 for 16 from the floor overall with six of his team's 20 turnovers for a season-low 10 points against the Timberwolves, James was asked to reflect on the Lakers reaching the quarter mark of their 2024-25 schedule under rookie coach J.J. Redick at 12-9.

"I wouldn't say I'll take it. I would never want to say that," James said. "It is what it is. This is our record. We've just got to continue to get better at both ends of the floor."

Particularly offensively, and it's not only James, the four-time NBA MVP whose average of 22 points per game is his lowest since he was a rookie 21 years ago.

"We're just not good offensively right now. I think we spent so much time trying to get our defense corrected that our offense took a toll and took a back seat to that," he said.

James hasn't made a 3-pointer since he tied Kyle Korver for seventh on the league's career list (2,450) last week. His fourth attempt against the Timberwolves from behind the arc was an air ball, causing an audible gasp from the crowd at Target Center.

The long ball isn't the only shot he's struggling with. The mid-range is on his list, too.

"Just period, just everything," James said. "Just a rhythm. I just feel off rhythm the last few games."

How does he fix it?

"Work. Just work. That's all," James said.

His stated goal of playing in all 82 games this season is still intact, but his recent performances have raised the question about whether such a quest would be wise.

"We are measuring the players, and we can tell if a guy is running hot or whatever," Redick said. "He does a remarkable job of taking care of his body and getting recovery. I don't know if that's in the best interest of us and him if he does that, but if he's feeling well and good then he should play."

James said the 82-game achievement remains a goal for him in his age-40 season—his birthday is Dec. 30—but he declined to discuss the possibility of resting.

The much bigger issue for now is getting the Lakers back on track offensively in this continued adjustment to Redick's system and a new staff. Their 80-point output at Minnesota was the team's lowest since a 122-73 loss at Dallas in 2017, according to Sportradar.

"Sometimes we look like a team that can compete with anyone, and sometimes we look like a team that is terrible and not going to do anything this season," co-star Anthony Davis said. "We've just got to figure out what team that we want to be the rest of the season

Harden joins Curry as only NBA players to reach 3,000 3-pointers

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—James Harden has joined Golden State's Stephen Curry as the only NBA players to reach 3,000 career 3-pointers.

Harden hit the milestone in the first half of the Los Angeles Clippers' 126-122 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Sunday night. He hit three 3s in the first half and three more in the second half while leading the Clippers with 39 points.

"Another one of those accomplishments that you never take for granted," Harden said. "The amount of work that I've put in—countless days and nights where I put the work in—a lot of people don't see it but the results happen, so I'm just thankful."

Harden just missed a triple-double, with nine rebounds and 11 assists.

The achievement finished off a standout week for the 35-year-old guard. Harden scored 43 points his most as a Clipper—in a road win over the Washington Wizards on Wednesday, his 100th career game of 40 or more. He joined Wilt Chamberlain, Kobe Bryant and Michael Jordan as the only players to do so.

"He had that first quarter against Washington where he reminded people, 'Hey, I can still go out here and drop 40 on you real quick,'" Nuggets coach Michael Malone said.

The Clippers are 13-9 without superstar Kawhi Leonard, who has yet to play this season while managing ongoing inflammation in his surgically repaired right knee.

Harden has been tasked with carrying a greater offensive load in Leonard's absence as well as Paul George leaving as a free agent in the offseason. He has responded and at times, like against the Wizards, his efforts have recalled his prolific scoring years with the Houston Rockets.

Malone noted that Harden has matured and responded to what's been asked of him as a point guard.

"He makes almost every key decision for their offense," the coach said. "He can beat you with his playmaking as well, and that shows you the talent, that shows you the quality of his game, where he's not solely the scorer."

Harden is also mentoring the team's younger players, a role he describes as "very, very comfortable" for him.

"It's easy for me just because I've been in this situation for a lot of my NBA career. Just helping guys as much as I can to where it makes the game a lot easier for them," he said. "It's really fun."

Norman Powell said he and the other Clippers love to play with Harden because they know he'll get them the ball.

"It's difficult to see from afar," Powell said, "but on the floor knowing when to attack, knowing when to get his shot off, when to get the guys open, the pass that he makes. He knows how to get guys open and to get the most out of the team."

McMillian's pick-6 helps Broncos spoil career nights by Winston, Jeudy and beat Browns

DENVER (AP)—Jameis Winston had a night to remember—and one to forget.

Ja'Quan McMillian returned an interception 44 yards for a game-sealing touchdown with 1:48 remaining, and Denver spoiled career-best performances by Winston and ex-Broncos wide receiver Jerry Jeudy, beating the Cleveland Browns 41-32 on Monday night.

The good for Winston: He threw for a franchise-record 497 yards and four touchdowns.

The not-so-good: He threw two interceptions that Denver returned for scores. The Broncos had three picks for 171 interception return yards against him.

"It was my fault," Winston said. "I've got to play better."

It was fully reminiscent of his best—and worst—year, 2019 with Tampa Bay, when he led the league in yards (5,109) and was second in TD passes (33) but also led the league in picks (30).

"I know I'm better than this," Winston said. "I'm just praying for the Lord to deliver me from pick-sixes. It's not me. Phenomenal game on offense, do some great things, but I mess it up."

Meanwhile, Jeudy had nine catches for 235 yards—the most in NFL history by a receiver against his former team — and a TD. Jeudy played his first four seasons with Denver and was booed every time he caught the ball.

"They only boo you," Jeudy said, "when they know there's something great in you."

Nik Bonitto intercepted Winston and took it 71 yards to the house late in the second quarter. Winston became the first NFL quarterback to throw for 400 or more yards with four or more TD passes and two pick-sixes.

Bo Nix finished with 294 yards passing, including a gorgeous deep ball from his own end zone that Marvin Mims Jr. hauled in for a 93-yard touchdown. Nix also threw two picks.

The Broncos (8-5) enter their bye week in the seventh and final playoff spot. Denver has a 76% probability of making the postseason, according to the NFL. The team hasn't been in the playoffs since winning the Super Bowl after the 2015 season.

AP

Denver Broncos cornerback Ja'Quan McMillian (29) celebrates his 46-yard interception return for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Cleveland Browns, Monday, Dec. 2, 2024, in Denver.

"It wasn't perfect, by any means, but we were able to finish," Broncos coach Sean Payton said. "Big plays—the game was full of them."

Winston surpassed the Browns record of 457 yards set by Josh McCown in 2015 against Baltimore. He threw a 70-yard TD pass to Jeudy and a pair of scores to tight end David Njoku in falling to 2-3 as a starter for the Browns (3-9) since replacing the injured Deshaun Watson.

Cleveland led 32-31 on Winston's 5-yard TD pass to Nick Chubb when Nix drove the Broncos to the Browns 9. On fourth-and-1, Payton lined up to go for it but changed his mind after a timeout. Wil Lutz kicked a go-ahead 27-yard field goal with 2:54 remaining.

Winston and the Browns had plenty of time to drive for a winning score, but Winston's throw to Elijah Moore was late and McMillian jumped the route. He fell to the turf untouched after making the catch, got up and sprinted to the end zone.

"The fact they did it twice was kind of crazy," Nix said of the interception returns. "I'm over there sitting, the benches, have the heaters over there, and I don't even have to move. It's pretty nice for the offense when they bail us out like that."

Jeudy, a first-round draft pick in 2020, was traded to Cleveland this spring after an up-and-down four seasons with Denver. He paused at the goal line before falling backwards into the end zone on his long TD catch. He also caught a 2-point conversion to get the Browns within 28-25.

"We had a plan going into it in terms of trying to get him open. I thought the plan was solid," Browns coach Kevin Stefanski said. "Jerry executed the plan really well. Got him open. Jameis made some throws. It's hard in the losing effort to feel good about anything."

The play by Jeudy came just 11 seconds after Nix threw a laser from about 4 yards deep in his end zone to Mims at around the 42. Mims caught it in stride, raced to the end zone and jumped into the stands to celebrate.

The Broncos relied on their running game in the first half, with Javonte Williams and Michael Burton scoring short TDs. It was Burton's second TD of his 10-year career.

The Browns fell to 4-13 in the Mile High City. Dustin Hopkins missed a 47-yard field goal to the left on Cleveland's opening drive.

Nix, who's earned the NFL Rookie of the Week three consecutive times, threw his first interception since Nov. 3. Chased by Myles Garrett, Nix tried to force a pass to Tony Franklin over the middle. Denzel Ward reached in and deflected the ball into the air and it was caught by Greg Newsome II.

Winston and Jeudy got rolling early with a 44-yard completion on the Browns' first offensive play.

"That wasn't supposed to go to me," Jeudy explained.

Justin Tucker's erratic season isn't getting any better, and it's hurting Baltimore's outlook

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)—The biggest question facing the Baltimore Ravens right now has little to do with Lamar Jackson or even a defense that started the season poorly.

It's about a kicking conundrum that has turned into a crisis.

Can the Ravens make it to the Super Bowl with Justin Tucker?

One of the more surprising subplots of this NFL season has been Tucker's decline from one of the greatest of all time to a week-in, week-out liability. Sunday's loss to Philadelphia might have been the nadir—he missed two field goals and an extra point in a game the Ravens ultimately lost 24-19.

"Points were at a premium in the game. They have been in a few of these games. Sometimes we haven't made the most of our opportunity to score points," coach John Harbaugh said Monday. "We're racking our brains, talking to Justin, looking at what we're doing. I'm very confident that it's going to get fixed. I believe it will. It has to.

"And he's the guy to get it fixed."

Harbaugh has given every indication that he's standing by Tucker, who is in his 13th season and is under contract through 2027. When he's at his best, he's the type of kicker that gives his team a clear advantage in close games, but this season he has missed eight field goals.

Sunday showed that against a good defensive team, the Ravens (8-5) can't simply assume their excellent offense will pile up points. There almost certainly will be close games in the weeks to come. Tucker's ability to come through will be tested again, and it's hard for Baltimore to feel too confident at the moment.

"When he was hitting, three or four years ago, hitting bombs, we were going 57, 58, 56 pretty regularly," Harbaugh said. "That's tightened up a little bit."

What's working

The Ravens continue to do a good job stopping the run. Although Saquon Barkley did eventually surpass the 100-yard mark late in the game, Baltimore held the Eagles to 140 yards on the ground, well below their usual output.

What needs help

Even beyond Tucker's problems, Sunday wasn't a great showing by Baltimore's special teams. Tylan Wallace was shaky returning punts, and the Ravens had to start four drives inside their own 20 and two inside their own 10.

"They had great bounces, and they downed right down in there," Wallace said. "I'm pretty sure we'll come back and talk about those and see what we can do to avoid those."

Stock up

The Ravens' defense continued to show signs of improvement, holding Philadelphia to 252 total yards.

"I think we've just locked in on some things, and we're playing our deep coverages better, bottom line," Harbaugh said. "You watch the coverage, you watch the guys' spacing, positioning, eyes, the communication, the checks that get made, and you just keep chasing doing the right things. It's not (that we) changed the defense. We're just playing it a lot better."

Stock down

Harbaugh was vague on receiver Diontae Johnson's situation. He was active Sunday but didn't play, and he has only one catch in four games since the Ravens acquired him in a trade from Carolina.

"I'm going to have to wait just to clarify it," Harbaugh said. "There's some moving parts there that we're going to have to figure out and explore and just see where we're at. I know that's not the answer you want, but that's the best I can do in fairness to everybody right now."

Injuries

The Ravens were missing pass-rushing ace Kyle Van Noy (hamstring/neck) on Sunday, and WR Rashod Bateman was dealing with knee soreness.

Key stats

Through his first 12 seasons, Tucker made field goals at a 90% clip. That's dropped to 70% this season. He had a 95% success rate from under 50 yards, and that's dipped to 83%.

Next steps

The Ravens have this week off before a Dec. 15 road game against the New York Giants. Then comes a home matchup with Pittsburgh that may determine whether Baltimore has any shot to win the AFC North.

3 among voters on Hall of Fame panel considering players bypassed by writers

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. (AP)—Hall of Fame players Paul Molitor, Eddie Murray, Tony Pérez, Lee Smith and Ozzie Smith are among 16 members of the classic era committee that will consider an eight-man Hall ballot that includes Dick Allen, Dave Parker and Luis Tiant.

Retired manager Joe Torre, also elected to the Hall, is on the committee that convenes Sunday at the winter meetings in Dallas. He will be joined by executives Sandy Alderson, Terry McGuirk, Dayton Moore, Arte Moreno and Brian Sabean; plus media members/historians Bob Elliott, Leslie Heaphy, Steve Hirdt, Dick Kaegel and Larry Lester, the hall said Monday.

The ballot also includes Tommy John, Steve Garvey and Ken Boyer along with former Negro Leaguers John Donaldson and Vic Harris. The classic era committee considers players, managers, umpires and executives whose greatest contributions to the sport were before 1980.

A vote of 75% or more is needed for election. Anyone chosen will be inducted into the Hall of Fame next July 27 along with players voted in by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, whose balloting will be announced on Jan. 21.

AP

Former Philadelphia Phillies player Dick Allen reacts after a ceremony unveiling his retired number prior to a baseball game between the Phillies and the Washington Nationals in Philadelphia, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2020.

Parker, John and Garvey are the living candidates. Tiant died on Oct. 8 at age 83.

Allen hit .292 with 351 homers and 1,119 RBIs from 1963-77. A seven-time All-Star, he was voted the 1964 NL Rookie of the Year and the 1972 AL MVP.

Parker, 73, hit .290 with 339 homers and 1,493 RBIs from 1973-91. He was the 1978 NL MVP, won the 1977 and '78 NL batting titles and was a seven-time All-Star.

Tiant was a four-time 20-game winner who went 229-172 with a 3.30 ERA from 1964-82. He was a three-time All-Star who won two AL ERA titles.

John, 81, was 288-231 with a 3.34 ERA over 26 seasons from 1963-89, becoming a four-time All-Star. He was a pioneer patient in elbow ligament-replacement surgery in 1974 by Dr. Frank Jobe, which became known as Tommy John surgery.

Garvey, 75, hit .294 with 272 homers, 1,308 RBIs from 1969-87, was the 1974 NL MVP and helped the Los Angeles Dodgers win the 1981 title. He played an NL record 1,207 consecutive games at first base.

Boyer was an 11-time All-Star who batted .287 with 282 homers and 1,141 RBIs from 1955-69. He was the 1964 NL MVP for the St. Louis Cardinals' World Series champions.

Donaldson pitched in the Negro Leagues and pre-Negro Leagues for more than 30 years.

Harris played 18 seasons in the Negro Leagues, mostly as a Homestead Grays outfielder, and managed the team for 11 seasons, winning seven Negro National League pennants and the 1948 World Series.

The Hall in 2022 restructured its veterans committees for the third time in 12 years, setting up panels to consider the contemporary era from 1980 on as well as the classic era. The contemporary baseball era holds separate ballots for players and another for managers, executives and umpires.

BASA

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on defense and offense. At the end of the day, it's really who scores the most runs and we just came out on top."

The regular season MVP went to Josenio "Bear" Alvarez of The Kliq for his consistency and explosiveness with the bat.

Alvarez was also crowned the home run champion with 21 homers, and was the RBI champion with 41 runs batted in.

I.J. Teigita of the Homies was dubbed the runs scored champion with 34; To Norita of the Homies had the most doubles with eight; and M.J. Aldan of Saipal was the triples champion with three.

On the mound, the earned run average, or ERA, champion was the Brotherhoods' Ikluk Masayos who sported a 6.417 average. The strikeout champion from Red Torch was Dom Hideo with 34.

Third place was Brotherhood, while the sportsmanship award went to team Ur Balls. In the regular season, Homies were the pennant champions, while the runners-up were Just4Fun.

GUAM

From page 16

Mini II Class, and Daryan Camacho of the Mini I Class.

The only CNMI riders that survived the Guam onslaught were Miyako Celis and Anella Igitol of the PowerPuff Class and Mini ATV Class, respectively.

"We never expected to do this well. We are very happy with the results but more so pleased with the bonds made with our brothers and sisters here in the Marianas. This is our third year coming out to Saipan for Turkey Cross races and each time has been a wonderful experience that it keeps us coming back. MRA is wonderful at hosting our Guam club and we couldn't ask for anything more except our yearly invitation! We just want everyone to have fun, ride safe, and continue to foster that love of riding and racing that keeps us together year after year!" said Rios about the 2024 edition of the Turkey Cross.

As for the course at the Cowtown Raceway Park and weather on Saipan during the weekend, Rios said he couldn't ask for more.

"Course was technical as usual. Practice is very critical on this track. Lines are changing as the track gets the usual wear. We were blessed to have perfect weather conditions. The evening showers made the track very nice during the day."

What's impressive about Guam riders' dominance during the 2024 edition of the Turkey Cross was that the Guam Motocross Club hasn't had a track to compete much less train for the past nearly two years.

"Unfortunately, our Guam riders haven't had a race track where they can practice and improve upon their skill set for more than year and half. But the Guam Motorsports Association hopes to change that real soon with the [CHamoru Land Trust Commission] now having to negotiate a lease."

Rios said that's why winning the 2024 Turkey Cross is a big boost to their collective resolve to have their own motocross race track once again.

"As with every sports organization, you want to give your athletes every opportunity to thrive. The proper tools, the proper equipment to do their absolute best. Yet in Guam we lack the foremost tool to achieve that, the facility. This is why the Guam Motocross Club has been working closely with the Guam Motorsports Association on the fight to regain the Guam Raceway Park, Guam's only raceway park for over 25 years."

MRA president Ellery Cruz, meanwhile, congratulated Guam Motocross Club for their impressive win in the 2024 Turkey Cross.

"All the classes went head-to-head showing their skills. With Guam being without a track for almost two years they dug deep and raced their hearts out. Although we battle on the track, the friendships and respect remain constant because motocross is more than a competitive sport out here, it's a family."

Cruz then extended a big shoutout to all the sponsors that made the event possible.

"The 2024 Turkey Cross would not be a big success if it wasn't for all of you. We hope to continue our partnership for future MRA events."

Sponsors of the 2024 Turkey Cross are the following: Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, Office of Grants Management, Department of Fire and Emergency and Medical Services, GPPC Inc., Forever CNMI D&Q International Distributors, MARPAC, Inas Kitchen, Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Services, Department of Public Works, Saipan Mayor's Office, Marianas Visitors Authority , Department of Corrections, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., DC Pro Rental, Office of Representative Manny Castro, Herman's Modern Bakery, Joeten Motors, YCO True Value, Monster Energy, JEM Company, United Equipment, Division of Parks and Recreation, and CNMI Division of Customs and Biosecurity.

U12

From page 16

CNMI's sluggers are used to because of a lack of play time, and they had a limited amount of time to prepare for it. But despite the losses, Kintol shared that some CNMI players are Top 10 in offense and fielding during the tourney and that this is the step in the right direction of developing and bringing back baseball year-round in the community.

He added that there were a lot of different aspects and rules of the WBSC tournament—such as 75 feet between bases, 51 feet from the pitcher's mound to home plate, steals, leading off bases, further throws and distances, and others that they're not used to as well—but he said, "they stepped to the plate and the challenge."

In their first game against Australia, Kintol said that the first-time jitters for the team were evident. "There was a lot of pressure representing NMI, but once they settled in, they were confident," he said. "The guys really progressed from game one. They got confident as each game came and it showed clearly in game three against Australia. It was very clear. Everybody thinks it was game four against Guam, but for me, I saw the shift in game three when they were confident and having fun."

As for the coaching staff which included Calvani Deleon Guerrero, Ian Norita, Nick Nekai, Kyle Hocog, Kintol said, "NSA put together a coaching staff and in a little under about three months, tried to get them groomed as best we can, and it showed."

In this debut, Kintol said that it's also a step forward in the direction of having year-round organized baseball for the youth once again.

With more organized baseball in the CNMI, he said there would also be opportunities to compete in more WBSC tournaments and even in Little League Baseball.

He said the goal is to have CNMI's sluggers compete in both WBSC tournaments and in Little League Baseball—which after a few years' hiatus, will be making a comeback next year. "SBL's side is focused on WBSC and more travel ball travel ball junior national tournaments—it's two separate things, however, we want it to coincide side by side so we can give them more opportunity."

Kintol then said a big thank you to the players, coaching staff, parents, fundraiser supporters, public and private sector sponsors, Natibu Sports Association, WBSC Oceania, and SBL-NMI Baseball.

As for Deleon Guerrero, he said, "This is [the] first time the CNMI baseball team joined the U12 world baseball softball association. Baseball on Saipan hit a pause due to COVID-19 and a huge thank you to Natibu Sports Association for reviving baseball for our young kids. The whole tournament was a wonderful experience for our all-stars and all of the coaches. There are different sets of rules compared to what we are familiar with in the Little League [Baseball] Association."

He added, "Overall, our kids were sensational and gave it their all. This group of kids showed their heart and grit during the tournament. We are so proud of them! The future of baseball shines very bright! With the support of the NSA and partnership of SBL we have people who are very passionate in bringing back the number one sport on the island."

"I want to give a huge thank you to NSA, the SBL, our parents, and our community who helped us during our fundraising phase," he said. "Lastly, I want to thank our coaching staff, head coach Ian Norita, assistant coaches, Nick Nekai, Kyle Hocog, Herm Kintol, and our manager George Camacho for their countless hours of sacrifice away from their families in order to mold, inspire, and teach these great group of kids to become a standout baseball players."

"I want to also send a huge thanks to the WBSC officials for being so helpful during our tournament. I want to thank our boys for taking us on this wonderful journey with them. Continue striving for greatness and finish strong in everything that you do in life!" he said.

The CNMI U12 Baseball Team sluggers were Skyler Leon Guerrero, Lennox Sablan, Elijah Babauta, Liam Sablan, Nate Nekai, Dylan Barcinas, Khoen Torres, Jo'ell Passi Herman, Scott Muna, Juan Damian, Denzel Kaipat, Izaiah Haro, Nathaniel Neth, Keoni Rosario, Damian Sablan, and Roque Camacho Jr.

The team captain was Dylan Barcinas, while Damian Sablan was their co-captain.

Hawks beat skidding Pelicans 124-112 to extend win streak to 4

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Riders of the Marianas Racing Association's Turkey Cross Motocross Race 2024 pose for a group photo after the competition last Sunday at the Cowtown Raceway Park.

Guam dominates in 2024 Turkey Cross

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

Guam won 11 of the 13 classes at stake in the Marianas Racing Association's Turkey Cross Motocross Race 2024 held last weekend at the Cowtown Raceway Park.

The south-siders were led by James "J.R." Cepeda who won the Expert Class by sweeping all heats for 75 points. He actually was part of a Guam sweep in the class as Tim Wenden and Blaze Aiken finished second and third with 69 points and 60 points, respectively.

Guam Motocross Club president Jeff Rios, meanwhile, took the Legends Class also via sweep with 75 points, followed by MRA's former president Charles Cepeda and Ray Yumul with 64 points and 62 points, respectively.

Other Guam riders who topped their classes were Richard Wenden in the Intermediate Class, Kanen Arceo of the Novice Class, Tim Wenden of the Veterans Class, Robert Bucek of the Big Boy ATV Class, Matthew Sandlin of the Big Boy ATV Novice Class, Shad'e Pitter of the Women's Open Class, John Boy Aguon of the

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U12 baseball team stepped up to the plate in WBSC debut

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI U12 Baseball Team poses for a group photo during the 2024 U12 Baseball World Baseball Softball Confederation Qualification Tournament in Guam held last Nov. 29-Dec. 2.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Despite not having the results they were striving for, the CNMI U12 baseball team still stepped up to the plate against two powerhouses—Guam and Australia—in their debut in the 2024 U12 Baseball World Baseball Softball Confederation Qualification Tournament in Guam held last Nov. 29-Dec. 2.

Joining the tournament was a big leap of faith for the coaching staff and CNMI sluggers, as there hadn't been organized leagues since the typhoons of the past and the pandemic. Still, that didn't stop them from taking on the challenge against two teams that play ball all year round.

The 15-player team chosen by the Natibu Sports Association and the Saipan Baseball League went winless as they first lost to Australia, 1-26, last Friday morning. They then played Guam in the afternoon and lost, 4-10. Last Saturday, it was a rematch against Australia but they lost again, 6-19. In their last game, they couldn't quite hold on to their lead and lost to Guam, 11-15.

Even with that, their team lead Herman Kintol of the SBL said the team showed out. He said that the level of competition was above what

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Open BASA awardees announced

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The MVPs and awardees of the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Men's Slow Pitch Open League were announced during the championship awards ceremony held at the Dandan Softball Field last Sunday.

Champion team Just4Fun pitcher Nate Camacho was hailed the playoff MVP for holding down runner-up team The Kliq in two straight games of the best-of-three championship series.

Camacho also took home the batting champion title with the highest average of .739 from 34 hits out of 46 plate appearances.

After the finals, he said of his awards, "It feels humbling. We just worked hard and stayed consistent—that's really it." On his strategy during the finals, he said, "[The Kliq] is a big offensive team. So I didn't issue any walks—that was the important thing and just tried our best to make everyone at least fight to get on base."

His team, he said, "did their job

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LEIGH GASES

Championship team Just4Fun pitcher Nate Camacho poses with his playoffs MVP and batting champion trophy alongside BASA board members during the awards ceremony of the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Men's Slow Pitch Open League last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field.

LEIGH GASES

Regular season MVP, home run champion with 21 homers, and RBI champion with 41 runs Josenio "Bear" Alvarez poses with his three trophies alongside BASA board members during the awards ceremony of the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Men's Slow Pitch Open League last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field.